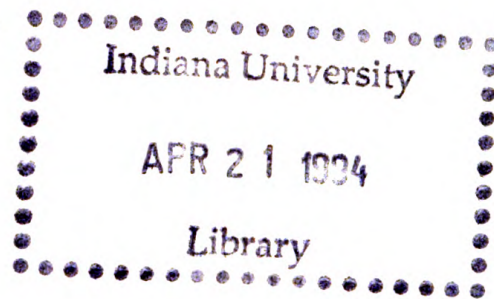


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A Biblical Text in Greek Romani

Gordon M. Messing

This article offers some philological and linguistic comments on a text in Greek Romani previously published in the collection, Papers from the Sixth and Seventh Annual Meetings, Gypsy Lore Society, North American Chapter.

In 1986 F. D. Mulcahy and Anita Volland published an article entitled "The Gospel According to St. Luke: A Preliminary Analysis of the Same Text in Three Romani Versions." This excellent piece may be summarized as follows. When George Borrow visited Spain in the second quarter of the 19th century on his famous expedition to distribute the Bible there clandestinely, he was laboring on a translation into Caló (Spanish Romani) of the Gospel according to Luke. After managing to have his version corrected in part by two Gypsy women, he published the entire version in 1837, the only extensive surviving text in Caló from the period when Caló was still an inflected Romani dialect. Since Caló in modern times has been largely supplanted by Spanish and survives, if at all, as isolated Romani words which can be inserted into Spanish discourse,¹ the authors thought to compare selected verses of this 19th century translation with other current translations of the same Biblical passages, in order to throw light on Borrow's unique text. Mulcahy elicited an oral translation into a modern (Spanish) Kalderaša dialect, and Diane Tong obtained another version of the same passages into Greek Romani from a twenty-five year old Gypsy woman from Thessaloniki. Mulcahy and Volland printed these three Romani versions of the passages in question along with an English version (Revised Standard), in addition to an 1821 Spanish version by Padre Phelipe de San Miguel, itself based on the Latin Vulgate.

In the present article I should like to comment on only the Greek Romani text which contains many interesting features. Not surprisingly, this text from Thessaloniki

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bears a strong family resemblance to the Greek Romani material I have collected in Athens (Messing 1988). In what follows I shall be pointing to similarities and dissimilarities with constant reference to my glossary; for convenience, I shall cite this work simply as *Glossary*. In order to simplify reference to the verses in question (Luke 1.18 to 1.23), I shall quote extracts from the English and the Greek Romani texts and furnish a commentary. For the convenience of readers, I shall first cite the full texts in English and Greek Romani.

1.18

- E. And Zechari'ah said to the angel, "How shall I know this?"
 G. Ta phendás o Zaxaría kai angelo: "Sar ka pakyáv adaléske"

1.18

- E. For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years.
 G. soske me sem baró, mi romní da si barí.

1.19

- E. And the angel answered him, "I am Gabriel who stand in the
 G. Ta phendás léske o angelo: "me sem o Gavríl kai parousiavávav

1.19

- E. presence of God; and I was sent to speak to you and bring you this good news.
 G. anglo o Del. Ta sem bičaldó te orbisaráv tuké ta te anáv tuké i šukar ídhisi,

1.20

- E. And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day
 G. Ta tu kan avés dilsízi ta nastik ka orbisarés méxri kai givés

1.20

- E. that these things come to pass, because you did not believe
 G. kai ka kerdón adalá epidhí in pakyéán kai

1.20

- E. my words, which will be fulfilled in their time."
 G. me órbes, adalá órbe ka kerdól kai pi givesa."

1.21.

- E. And the people were waiting for Zechari'ah, and they wondered at his delay in the temple.
 G. ta e manuša bekléordula e Zaxarías ta aporisárenas sóske arisarélas but te avel andi kangirí.

1.22

- E. And when he came out he could not speak to them, and
 G. Kána iklistás nastík orbisarélas lénge, ta

1.22

- E. they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple.
 G. akyardé óti dikhlás órama andi kangirí.

1.23

- E. And when his time of service was ended, he went to his home.
 G. Kána avilé e givésa leske bukiaké ta bitilér, gelótar kai po kher.

Readers of the Mulcahy-Volland article will have noticed that the Greek Romani text was based not on the Greek New Testament but on a translation of that work into Demotic Greek, now the official language of Greece although still not completely uniform. Since the New Testament is in Greek, why does it have to be retranslated? The answer is that the New Testament, which dates from the earliest centuries of the Christian era, is written in what is called Koiné or Common Dialect, the form of Greek which replaced the Classical Greek dialects, and it is not understandable by Greeks today unless they have been instructed in its older, often archaic morphology and vocabulary. It is always possible that the demotic version may differ slightly from the New Testament original, even though all translations of the New Testament are presumably verified by the Holy Synod in Athens. (When the first translation of the Gospels was made by Alexander Pallis in 1901, this was considered so blasphemous that there was rioting on the streets of Athens.)²

In the very first verse cited here (Luke 1.18), Zechariah (Zacharias in the Authorized Version) asks, in the Romani, "How shall I believe (in) this?" Is there a nuance of difference here? Probably not, the slight verbal distinction is not a real semantic difference. The New Testament Greek original is reflected closely in the English, the demotic rephrasing probably in the Romani. The *New English Bible* translates the passage, "How can I be sure of this?"

Zechariah explains in the next verse (1.19) why he is skeptical about the angel's prophesy that his wife will give birth to a son: "for I am an old man, and my

wife is advanced in years.” The Greek Romani offers here a calque on colloquial Greek usage, “for I am big (*baro*) and my wife also (*da*, from Turkish) is big (*bari*).” The Romani adjective means not only ‘big’, but also ‘old’ because it is a substitute for the Greek adjective *megalos*, *megali* which has these two meanings.

The angel replies (1.19), “I am Gabriel, who stand in the presence of God.” The Greek Romani renders this as “I am Gabriel who present myself/appear before God.” The verbal form used is derived directly from Greek, a frequent phenomenon in this dialect. Most commonly, an active Greek verb like *parousiázo* ‘present’ can be turned into its Romani equivalent by adding *-arav* to the aorist stem: *parousiasarav*. Here, however, the Greek reflexive *parousázome* ‘present myself’, has to be converted into a Romani reflexive by adding *-avav* to the aorist stem, *parousiasavav*. (This formation is described in *Glossary*, p. 26, but only in an inchoative sense.)

The angel continues (1.19), saying, “I was sent to speak to you and bring you this good news” (Authorized Version, “these glad tidings”). The New Testament Greek original uses here the Greek verb *euangélizome* and uses it, not in its more frequent meaning, ‘preach the Gospel’, but in its etymological meaning ‘bring good news’. The Greek Romani, like the English, paraphrases this literally, “that I bring to you the beautiful (piece of) news.” The word for ‘news’, *idhisi*, not listed in *Glossary*, is a Greek loan word.

In 1.20 “you will be silent” comes out in the Greek Romani version as “you will come (= become) silent”; for this usage see *Glossary* s.v. *avav*. The word used to mean ‘silent’, *dilsizi*, is a Turkish loan word, literally ‘tongue-less’. I find the combination of *kan aves* ‘you will (be)come’ rather odd. In the speech of my Athenian informants this would be *kam aves*, the rule here being that the particle denoting futurity is *kam* before a vowel and *ka* before a consonant; this particle is a conventionalized prefix derived from the verb *kamav* ‘love’. Could this be a typo?

Verse 1.20 continues, “and you will be unable to speak”. The Greek Romani for this is *ta nastik ka orbisares* ‘and you will not be able to speak’. *Glossary* records *nasti* ‘it is not possible’, with *nastik* only as a variant. Here *nastik* seems to be the favored form since it occurs both here and in 1.22.

The verse 1.20 continues with the phrase “until the day”. The Greek Romani here borrows the Greek preposition *mexri* ‘until’ plus the superfluous Romani preposition *kai*; *gives* ‘day’ and its plural *givesa* at the end of this sentence are more conservative than the forms given in *Glossary*, *gyes* and plural *gyesa*. These slight divergences are of considerable interest, since the dialect of *Glossary* and that of this translator are clearly very close.

1.20 goes on, “(until the day) that these things come to pass,” Greek Romani (*gives*) *kai ka kerdon adala*, literally “that these (things) will be done;” *ka kerdon* is future passive from *kerav* ‘make’; *kerdon*, not listed in *Glossary*, is perhaps a

dejotated form from **kerdyon*, cf. 3 sing. *kerdjol*, *Glossary* p. 26. The demonstrative pronoun *adala*, 'these' and the form *adaleske* in 1.18 come from a stem common in other Romani dialects but which do not occur in my materials (cf. in *Glossary* s.v. *kadala*).

Verse 1.20 continues, "because you did not believe my words," and in Greek Romani 'because' is rendered by the Greek conjunction *epidhi*, presumably the verb *pakyean* must be taken as 2 person sing. preterite from *pakyav* 'believe'. What phonetic value the *ε* is intended to convey is not clear. The English text of 1.20 goes on to say, "(words) which will be fulfilled in their time." Since the Greek Romani version just previously rendered "these things will come to pass" by a plural verb, *ka kerdon*, it is not clear why the plural expression, "(words) will be fulfilled" is here rendered by the same expression in the singular, *ka kerdol*, unless this follows the wording of the Demotic Greek text.

In 1.21 we see another characteristic of the dialect, its use of certain Turkish verbal patterns. The English runs, "and the people were waiting for Zechariah." To translate 'were waiting', the translator used the Turkish word *beklemek*, and she knew enough Turkish to put the verb into the past progressive tense. The form used, however, *bekleordula*, is incorrect, or at any rate is not standard Turkish; it should be *bekliyordular*. No doubt the form used was rendered by ear as an approximation. The sentence goes on, "and they wondered at his delay in the temple." To express 'they wondered at' the Greek Romani borrows the Greek verb *aporó* and creates a Romani verb on its aorist stem, *aporisarav*; *aporisarenas* is imperfect 3 pl. "Wondered at his delay" has presumably been expanded to "wondered why he was delaying;" the verb *arisarav* which from the context must have this meaning is not in *Glossary* (which does list the possibly related verb *risavav* 'return').³ 1.22 continues, "when he came out he could not speak to them." Again the Greek Romani text uses *nastik* for 'it is not possible' and follows this without a conjunction (as in 1.18) directly by a verbal form, *orbisarelas*, 'he could not speak.'

"They perceived," says 1.22, "that he had seen a vision in the temple." Although the New Testament word for 'vision,' *optasia*, still figures in modern Greek, *orana* is also in common use, and the translator has borrowed this Greek word for her Romani text.

There is a problem in 1.22, "he made signs to them and remained dumb." Something seems to be wrong with the Romani version, which means literally, "he did not make to them with the hands," which looks like the opposite of the intended sense. Should the negative 'not' (*in*) be excised?

1.23 reads: "And when his term of service was ended." This is translated in the Greek Romani text by "When came the days of his work and they ended." Zechariah's "service" could of course be called his "work," though the translation would have been improved by expanding the expression (e.g. "his work as a priest").

The word *bitiler* 'finished' is a Turkish loan word, but the correct Turkish form should be spelled *bittiler* (definite past). This is again no doubt a form learned by ear.

Acknowledgment . I am grateful to Mrs. Ayşe Pamir Dietrich, a Cornell doctoral candidate in linguistics and native speaker of Turkish, for her help with Turkish grammar.

Notes

¹ Merrill F. McLane has done yeoman work in collecting Caló vocabulary still in use.

² For more on Pallis as a champion of the cause of Demotic Greek, see Bien (1972:110-112).

³ It is possible that *arisarav* 'tarry, delay' and *risavav* 'arrive' come from the same stem despite the difference in meaning. Gjerdmann and Ljungberg (1963) list a verb *aresav* which has a wide range of meanings, from 'reach, come as far as' to 'be sufficient, get somewhere in time' and 'overtake'. Sampson (1968 [1926]) lists a verbal stem *res* with the same meanings.

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Irving Brown: The American Borrow?

David J. Nemeth

*English-language adventure writing featuring Gypsies is an uncommon enough genre to invite inevitable comparisons and contrasts between the life and work of two of its more prolific representative authors, the remembered Englishman George Borrow (1803-1881), and the all but forgotten American Irving Brown (1888-1940). Borrow was a nineteenth-century polyglot and author of travel tales and romantic autobiography in which Gypsies figure prominently. In his most famous book *The Bible in Spain* (1843) he successfully portrays himself to the Victorian middle class as a charismatic adventurer on a holy mission. His most admiring biographers have since lionized him as “a magnificent wanderer.” There is today a George Borrow Society based in England. This article suggests that although Brown admired and strove to emulate Borrow, he achieved no lasting success. Brown’s wanderings among Gypsies, as described in his own autobiographical published works and in his personal diaries, are interpreted here as “misadventures.” Brown, unlike Borrow, admits in print to personal discomforts, disappointments and anxieties. These are unappealing traits in a Gypsy-adventure writer. By authoring his own obscurity, Brown attracts no biographers. Nor was there ever a coterie of admirers—even in the American-based Gypsy Lore Society—to recommend him or his works. Cruel irony that, lacking in Borrow’s charisma and mission, Brown’s furtive travels in search of Gypsies in imitation of Borrow may have contributed to the brevity and tragedy of his life.*

American Gypsy Studies has been neglecting one of its most prolific and interesting pioneers in Irving Brown (1888-1940). The fiftieth anniversary of the appearance of Brown’s groundbreaking “The Gypsies in America” was in 1979, and the centennial anniversary of Brown’s birthday in 1988. Both events escaped the

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collective memory of the American-based Gypsy Lore Society, and this oversight is ample enough proof of Brown's obscurity today.

Whether or not Brown's obscurity is deserved is a matter of interpretation, and the time seems long overdue to provide a benchmark for future elaboration on the significance of his life and work. For some students of Gypsy culture, reading Brown's work has significance merely for motivating them to pursue their own Gypsy studies. This was true in my own case, when I happened to first read his *Gypsy Fires in America* (1924).¹ However, decades later I had yet to discover much about Irving Brown's life. His books were to an unknown extent autobiographical; "unknown" because no others—apart from those few who had penned his reviews and obituaries—had ever written about his life in relation to his work.² Brown's career is interesting if only because he was one of the few Americans writing books about Gypsies in the interwar period. After all these years of neglect, Brown's life and work as a travel writer featuring Gypsies warrants at least a biographical reminder, which this paper provides. However, the biographical sketch provided here serves a narrow purpose.³ It facilitates exploration of Brown's obscurity in relation to a shadow cast over him by the life of George Borrow (1803-1881).

George Borrow is remembered as nineteenth-century polyglot and author of travel tales and romantic autobiography in which Gypsies figure prominently. His place in the evolution of Gypsy studies in America—and elsewhere—has yet to be ascertained. While there is little doubt that he was enthusiastic about Gypsies, there is debate over the extent to which he is a credible authority on them.⁴ This paper sidesteps the issue of Borrow's credibility as a Gypsy expert to explore the extent to which his adventurous legend and manner of association with Gypsies may have later influenced the career of Irving Brown.

The juxtaposition of the lives of Borrow and Brown for comparative purposes is a device that results from exploring the idea that Borrow, Brown and many other students of Gypsy culture may have each attempted to escape through adventurous action, rather than idle philosophy, the repressions of powerful social forces within the prevailing conformist societies of their times.⁵ Such individuals, though separated by time and space, may nevertheless similarly enact an escape through relations with Gypsies—their shared symbol of unfettered human aspiration.

It is during the exploration of this idea that one begins to wonder "How do these escapists relate to one another?" The more one learns about Irving Brown, for example, the more his life seems a life lived in poor imitation of Borrow. This is the argument presented in this paper. To proceed with this argument, it is useful to recall George Borrow before introducing Irving Brown.⁶

George H. Borrow

George Borrow was born 1803 in Norfolk, England, the second son of military recruiter, and so moved frequently about in England as a child. Borrow briefly attended an excellent high school at Edinburgh, but then moved to Ireland and learned in a school of harder knocks to love horses and languages.

Norwich, England, became the base for Borrow's subsequent childhood wanderings. He was articled at age sixteen for five years to a firm of Norwich solicitors, mastered German, translated Scandinavian poetry, and by his late teens had learned more than ten additional foreign languages. He apparently suffered a nervous breakdown while a teenager and thereafter suffered from occasional desperate spells of melancholy, which he described as "the horrors." He moved to London and continued translations, but also compiled books (notably *Celebrated Trials*, the case histories of miscreants and low-lives), and generally subsisted on hackwork. Unsatisfied with his life, he availed himself of every opportunity to escape to peripatetic travels throughout England and Scotland in search of local color. His escapades with Gypsies highlighted this period, as is revealed in some of his later published works.

Eventually Borrow returned to Norwich, but was destitute. He engaged in more hackwork and obscure Scandinavian poetry translations. This humdrum he apparently punctuated with more walking tours (Borrow's biographers are most speculative about his experiences during this approximately eight-year-long hiatus in his otherwise well-documented life).

In 1833 Borrow embarked on an fortunate path with the British and Foreign Bible Society as an overseas agent of its ecumenical enterprise. The pious masses of Victorian middle-class England would soon take note. Borrow was sent first to St. Petersburg to oversee the printing of a Manchu translation of the Bible. He also visited Gypsy camps in Moscow. In 1835 he was dispatched to the Iberian peninsula to distribute a Spanish version of the Bible. He traveled in Spain as a colporteur for five years, during which time he was also briefly imprisoned; his adventurous exploits among civil chaos and hostile Catholics first earned him widespread name recognition among the pious middle class back in England. During that time, he translated, printed and distributed parts of the New Testament in the Spanish Gypsy language.

He married at the end of this long sojourn and began to write books. His first, *The Zincali*, was published in 1841. It was a folkloric and linguistic potpourri about Spanish Gypsies. He put more of himself into his second book, *The Bible in Spain*, a travel narrative which was probably the best-selling book in England in 1843. His life peaked.

Too much time passed before his next book appeared, *Lavengro* (1851), a romantic autobiography involving Gypsies. Critics were unkind, the public only mildly interested. His next book, was a sequel titled *The Romany Rye* (1857). It failed. Borrow was frustrated but remained energetic. He wrote two more books, *Wild Wales* (1862) and *Romano Lavo-Lil* (1874) but by then had lost most of his public. He survived his wife by twelve years and died in 1881 in relative obscurity. However, the seeds of what has been termed “a Borrowian Cult” were already apparent in his obituaries, and his phoenix had risen by 1899, the year in which the first of Borrow’s many biographies appeared.⁷

Even from this brief biographical sketch it is understandable that Robert R. Meyers (1966:40) attributes much of Borrow’s popularity in his time to “the result of three elements in his books which appealed powerfully to his Victorian readers,”

constant emphasis upon travel and adventure, the presence everywhere of a strongly moral and religious tone, and the omnipresent appeal of a flamboyant personality.... The travel narratives made him instantly popular because they were presented as fact rather than fiction, because they were picaresque in spirit and structure, and because they were intensely nationalistic.

That Borrow’s success as charismatic adventurer among Gypsies may have influenced Brown’s life and work is not difficult to establish. The following biographical sketch for Brown does just this, and then invites elaboration on some of their striking similarities, and on their differences. These biographical sketches provide a basis for discussing and interpreting the obscurity of Brown’s career against the background of Borrow’s renown.

Irving H. Brown

Irving Henry Brown was born 1888 in Madison, Wisconsin. He was the second son of prominent lawyer and civic leader. Educated locally, he was somehow alienated from his father, and became a restless youth and a runaway.⁸ He finally graduated from high school in 1907, then traveled to Europe, discovering Spain, Gypsies, Borrow, languages and poetry. Brown earned his B.A. degree in French and Spanish from University of Wisconsin in 1911, and his M.A. degree in 1912. He continued on as instructor there until 1915. His B.A. thesis is titled “Edgar Allan Poe and His Disciples in France.”

Brown obtained a fellowship to study Romance languages at Columbia University in 1915, and soon after married an actress. He immediately suffered marital problems, separations, and poverty, while finding time to travel widely—notably in Spain—in search of Gypsies and “local color.” These travels occurred

between various teaching positions over a tumultuous five-year period, during which he neglected his health. He received his Ph.D. from Columbia and successfully published translations from Spanish and French poetry. By 1922 he has had two children. He has also contracted tuberculosis.

His first book about Gypsies, *Nights and Days on the Gypsy Trail*, was published in 1922, followed by *Gypsy Fires in America* in 1924, *Deep Song* in 1929, and *Romany Road* in 1932. This "Gypsy" decade of authorship, not only of popular books and encyclopedia articles, but of articles in scholarly and popular journals, briefly established Brown's reputation as the American-born authority on Gypsies.⁹ He was the American correspondent for the Gypsy Lore Society. But Brown's energies were largely drained even then, his stamina sapped by deteriorating health and distracting domestic discord. He finally divorced in 1938, and died alone and frustrated in Tucson, Arizona, in 1940.

An Imitation Borrow

Irving Brown and George Borrow appear at first glance to be, at the least, kindred spirits, two escapists who took to the Gypsy trail in an attempt to assert their own unique selves. Some odder coincidences (for example, they both shared the same middle name Henry), can easily distract one from other, more productive, paths of inquiry: their comparable interests, experiences and abilities involving especially their attraction to Gypsies and Spain, but also those involving foreign languages, travel, translating and writing. Such albeit superficial comparisons do justify at least suggesting their commonality for discussion purposes.¹⁰

Moreover, an inspection of Brown's personal diaries and journals, and a rereading of his four published books and many articles on Gypsies, offer evidence of the shaping of Brown's ambitions and accomplishments under the influence of Borrow. This evidence not only supports the hypothesis that Irving Brown was greatly inspired by the example of George Borrow, but also suggests that he lived in imitation—though poor imitation—of Borrow. Finally, it must be emphasized that while both Borrow and Brown had brief popularity during their lifetimes, Borrow's popularity was immense compared with Brown's, and that it is his burst of fame, not Brown's, that echoes down to the present.

There are at least ten book-length biographies of George Borrow attesting to his renown (Fraser 1984); not to mention a century-old Borrowian "cult" of personality which has persisted, mainly in England, since his death in 1881 and which is now effervescent as a George Borrow Society. While one of Borrow's biographers (cited in Meyers 1966:142) writes "The mystery of Borrow is itself mysterious," more recent academic literature focusing on the ideology of adventure does offer some new insight into his lasting popularity (Anderson 1970; Nerlich

1987; Green 1993). The cult of Borrow may, for example, be described for discussion purposes as a “cult of potestas,” or power (Green 1993:7). Adventure literature, according to Green, offers readers iconic heroes—usually men—acting with power; imposing their wills “on a dangerous situation, including the other people involved.” This is vintage Borrow, who portrays himself in what Victorian readers perceived as a thrilling adventure—*The Bible in Spain*—as an “all-conquering, self-reliant hero of God” (Meyers 1966: 23). No one, including Gypsies, ever triumphs over Borrow’s “power,” a composite of his leadership, cunning, endurance and physical courage. It is in recognition of this power that the travel writer Borrow has become an object of cultish devotion.

As stated, Irving Brown has had not even one biographer since his death in 1940, and he is today scarcely remembered anywhere outside of the Gypsy Lore Society—and has very few admirers even within it.¹¹ Briefly, in his prime, Brown did wear “the American Romany mantle of [Charles Godfrey] Leland,” who founded the Gypsy Lore Society in 1888, and wore it “with scholarly distinction and an understanding heart” according to Richardson Wright, who penned Brown’s obituary in the Society’s *Journal* (1945:1-2). Brown’s prime was all too brief and long ago, lasting for at most a decade after the publication of his first book about Gypsies, *Nights and Days on the Gypsy Trail* (1922a), sub-titled *Through Andalusia and on Other Mediterranean Shores*. An anonymous review of its contents reads,

Spain is the background for the trail of the gypsies whose windings the author follows all over the Peninsula, in country and city, in the Pyrenees and in Barcelona, in Cadiz and Jerez, in Cordova and Gibraltar, across the strait to Tangier, in Malaga, Granada, Guadix and Seville. He got at the heart of gypsy life, watched them in the dance and in song, in the bull ring and at fairs and festivals (Anonymous 1922?a).

Given this exotic blend of subject matter the connection between Borrow and Brown was obvious to publicists and critics. One writes, “This is a book to put beside *Romany Rye* and Borrow’s other gypsy chronicles, for it is an astonishing account” (Anonymous 1922b). Of course Brown made that connection obvious by acknowledging already in Chapter One of *Nights and Days* that “The discovery of Borrow’s Gypsies of Spain [*The Zincali, or an Account of the Gypsies in Spain* (1841)] had given me the Romani fever....” He thereafter refers to Borrow in subsequent chapters in this book, and in his future writings.

One of Brown’s notebooks (written in 1912?) elaborates further on his debt to Borrow: “From my tenderest years the word gypsy has always been a magic one with me, and a recent reading of the works of (George) Borrow, (particularly the *Zincalo*) the *Romany Rye*, the pioneer Gypsy Gentleman, and an opportunity of visiting Spain, roused in me a very strong desire of making a close acquaintance of

the race which form [sic] so large an element of the picturesque and not to mention the picaresque of Andalusia" (Brown, Box 16, Folder 5).¹²

It may seem a vast and unnecessary leap from describing Brown's obvious "inspiration by Borrow" to speculating about Brown's "imitation of Borrow," but the exercise is more than interesting. Consider, for a moment, Brown's "aim" in writing *Nights and Days on the Gypsy Trail*, which emerges during its introduction: "to take you far and wide on the open road, to introduce you as a friend to some of the many Gypsies whom I have known intimately, and to initiate you to the joys and adventures of the Gypsy trail" (Brown 1922a:xi). Given Borrow's renown, a reader might fairly ask of Brown, "Why should I follow you rather than Borrow himself?" Because, Brown assures us, "I have bent every effort to master the language of Spanish Gypsies" and then cites his source of instruction as having begun with the Calo word lists published by Borrow (Brown 1922a:8).

Playing the Game

Furthermore, Brown claims considerable experience among Gypsies in playing "the game," as he calls it; "the game of transforming oneself and moving in strange surroundings" (Brown 1922a:9). This seems the same game mastered a century earlier by Sir Richard Francis Burton [1821-1890]), and then others, in a fraternity of memorable Victorian explorers and travelers which included Borrow.¹³

Brown, however, lived in a jaded post-Victorian age and seems to have played the game poorly. His frustrations as a player are revealed in all his books, which are, by and large, autobiographical. He clearly embraces the game but—unlike Borrow—rarely triumphs. This is evident in his "first field work experience with Gypsies" in Wisconsin where he discovered on the outskirts of Madison, "a veritable 'Gypsy dell,' ...so hidden by trees that not a house was in sight" (Brown 1922a:10-11). In his notebooks Brown actually describes this place as his "dingle" which seems an uncommon choice of words for a Wisconsin lad describing a "dell." Is Brown's "dingle" not rather Brown's attempt to live in imitation of Borrow by imagining himself, not in early-twentieth-century Wisconsin, but in the early-nineteenth-century Staffordshire(?) site of Borrowian high adventure and romance, in the Mumper's Dingle described in *Lavengro*?

On that first occasion near Madison, Brown made an awkward attempt to glean some information from what he believed to be an English Gypsy horsetrader named Lee. Having discovered as much, he reports, "But I got no further and withdrew greatly downcast" (Brown 1922a: 12). Brown's disappointment in this instance iterates thereafter as many other disappointments throughout his troubled life, creating the pattern of promising but unfulfilled opportunities that character-

izes both Brown's Gypsy studies and his personal relationships. He advances boldly, loses control of situations, then retreats with misgivings.

Writing in retrospect, Brown attributes his failure to win that first game among Gypsies in Wisconsin to his having had at the time "only little of the [Gypsy] vocabulary, and none of the manner" (Brown 1922a:10-12). Shamed, Brown commits to self-improvement after that, as indicated by a terse diary entry that demands "How to get strong!" He clings to this goal tenaciously, and within a decade he has become a fine, strong linguist, demonstrating his ability to comprehend and converse with Gypsies on four continents. On the other hand, he never really masters the successful "manner" he aspires to; that of the "magnificent wanderer," Borrow.

To emphasize Borrow's characteristic "successful manner" among Gypsies in contrast to Brown's failure, we turn to Borrow's own first childhood encounter with Gypsies, as he describes it in *Lavengro* (1851:35-37). Borrow encounters a couple of Gypsy counterfeiters camped in a roadside grove. They threaten to kill him on the spot for spying. But Borrow is carrying a defanged viper inside his shirt, and he calls it forth as a defense. The Gypsies are impressed. Their own child, named Jasper, then appears; he promises to become Borrow's lifelong friend. His parting words to Borrow that day are "Goodbye...I daresay we shall meet again, remember we are brothers; two gentle brothers" (Borrow 1851:44). This anecdote describing Borrow's manner under duress demonstrates how the "game" is played to win. Borrow's clear-cut victory stems from successfully transforming himself from child to a snake-charmer and moving deftly in strange and dangerous surroundings.

Brown, unable to play the "game" nearly as well as Borrow, is a less interesting personality, which helps explain his neglect by potential biographers. Rena Gropper, past president of the Gypsy Lore Society, has written to me concerning Irving Brown, "I know very little about [him].... I believe...he thought he might have had a Gypsy ancestor somewhere on his family tree." She then mentions Brown's "lack of dazzle" and that Brown "compared to people like Borrow and [Walter] Starkie...simply does not seem very colorful." She concludes, insightfully, that "Their writings devote almost as much attention to themselves as to the Gypsies."

Gropper's letter inspires me to elaborate on a few specific reasons for Brown's neglect by potential biographers. First, he has acquired a poor reputation as a Gypsy scholar, probably undeserved, which he partly invites on himself by pretending to be a Gypsy. I call this "the curse of the counterfeit Gypsy." Second, unlike Borrow, Brown writes much too candidly of his own human failings. I call this "the curse of the unconcealed weaknesses."

The Curse of The Counterfeit Gypsy

In *Nights and Days on the Gypsy Trail* Brown is introduced to the reader in a curious presentation written by his acknowledged “friend and Master” George E. Woodberry, a University of Wisconsin scholar.¹⁴ Woodberry writes: “Our author is more than sympathetic—molto simpatico—with what he describes; indeed, he has the secret that only the blood can tell to the understanding heart, and speaks as one of the tribe. The ‘black drop’ colors all he writes” (Brown 1922a:xiv). Does this imply that Brown has confided to Woodberry that he is a Gypsy? Or, does Brown perhaps think he is a Gypsy? Does he merely fantasize about it? Or is he a counterfeit Gypsy, living a deceit that is part of “the game”?

The issue is important because Borrow never made a claim for Gypsy ancestry in his books. Brown, in contrast, makes the claim often. He persists perhaps in the mistaken belief that having Gypsy blood enhances his credibility among Gypsies as well as among Gypsy scholars. Perhaps Brown felt the need to compensate for major physical deficiencies in the Borrowian manner and magnificence which he could never imitate. Borrow was “tall, powerfully built, dark-skinned and handsome” (Meyers 1966:62). Brown, in contrast, was rather average in appearance.

We read in *Nights and Days on the Gypsy Trail* that Brown sought out long exposure to sunlight before conducting his field work in Spain. And in Spain, among Gypsies, he goes by the name Moreno (Sp. ‘darkie’), a convenient direct translation of his family name (Brown 1922a:116). He tells a *gitana* in Cadiz, “My father is a Gentile but I am a Gypsy like my mother” and, “Even if my face isn’t as dark as yours, my blood is as black. Look!” he shouts, and then begins to tear his wrist open with his teeth, as proof (Brown 1922a:57). If Brown’s gesture seems inspired, his lie is not.¹⁵ It is a fantasy common to Gypsy-lovers, especially neophytes. And it is no imitation of Borrow.

Yet, Brown repeats his claim to Gypsy blood in subsequent books. In *Gypsy Fires in America* (1924:3) he encounters Gypsies, converses with them in Romani, and casually lets fall the information that he is “part Romani.” Here, a scholarly reader may be tempted to admire Brown for successfully enough passing as a Gypsy in order to succeed in his field work. But in a later anecdote he meets a Gypsy woman and claims that “With me, a Romani, she could be herself” (Brown 1924:11). Here Brown either has, or has deluded himself in to believing that he has, Gypsy blood. On still another page he writes, “It is true that a [Gypsy] drew a knife against me, but he did not believe I was one of the blood” (Brown 1924:137).

In some other passages, Brown either demurs from his claim. For example, “It never occurred to me that I was playing a role; and it was not long before I was convinced that I had a strain of Gypsy blood” (Brown 1922a:9), or he seems utterly



Irving Brown. Undated photograph, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, negative number WHi(X3)46829.

confused, "Was it the call of the blood, or simply the call of the wild?" (Brown 1922a:10). Brown's father compiled a thorough genealogy of his side of the family in 1907, about the time that Irving was launching himself down the Gypsy trail. No Gypsies turned up in the Brown genealogy, it appears. So, Irving's claim for Gypsy ancestry became based instead on his mother's side of the family.

Her maiden name was Williams. Brown writes that his mother's family origin is unknown, but that its name is a common one among Welsh and English Gypsies. He takes comfort in stories about his grandfather, whom he claims periodically "would revert to a Gypsy life, camping and trading horses" (Brown 1922a:9-10).

If his claiming to be part Gypsy seems redundant and unnecessary to a reader, Brown's personal fascination with Gypsy kidnaping may seem similarly excessive. Granted, in *Gypsy Fires in America* (1924:119-121) Brown performs a noble service to his readers by exposing the "myth" of Gypsy kidnaping. But, in *Nights and Days on the Gypsy Trail* (1922a:8) he makes an interesting and very personal reference to his own kidnaping: "As a very small child," he writes, "I remember seeing a [Gypsy woman].... I followed her.... I was afraid of her, owing to the kidnaping legend. Perhaps I was half hoping that I should be kidnaped. For at any rate, a regret at not having followed her farther haunted me for years." Now, Borrow also writes of himself in relation to the threat of kidnaping, so let us compare. "No attempts were ever made to steal me in my infancy," writes Borrow, making a rare jest at his own expense, "and I never heard that my parents entertained the slightest apprehension of losing me by the hands of kidnappers" (Borrow 1851:7).¹⁶ It is characteristic of Brown to regret not being kidnaped by Gypsies, and characteristic of Borrow to treat it as an indignity that he was somehow unworthy of abduction.

Brown may never have meant to harm Gypsies, but his last book, *Romany Road* (1932) could be construed as incendiary, for its subtitle is *The Story of Pete Brockhaus Thought to Have Been Kidnaped by Gypsies*. Furthermore it may seem particularly insensitive and exploitive of Brown to have published this book in the year of the Lindbergh baby's kidnaping. On the other hand, he dedicated the book to his own two children. Also, his diaries reveal a deep concern to be able provide for them with book royalties after his approaching death from tuberculosis.

If Brown truly believed he was part Gypsy, he backed away from its ultimate implications. He never seriously considered marrying a Gypsy even when the opportunity arose, as it did occasionally. At the end of *Romany Road*, Brown thinks aloud as his principal character Pete Brockhaus, who ultimately rejects a Gypsy lifestyle because he "could hardly picture himself as the head of a family, bound to Gypsy life forever by ties of blood" (Brown 1932:266). More revealing, Brown brings *Gypsy Fires in America* to conclusion with the realization that whatever his claims to a Gypsy bloodline he would never be able to "join the Gypsies" because

he was an “unattached male” in Gypsy society, which he describes as a “peculiar patriarchal organization” (Brown 1924:233). It must have been terribly frustrating for this young wanderer and scholar, already trapped in an unhappy marriage and diseased, also to meet the limits of Gypsy tolerance for his company. Yet he was by then a published expert on Gypsies. No doubt he expected some lasting recognition and respect by other Gypsy scholars—but this was not to be.

Playing “the game” among Gypsies, even to the extent of claiming blood ties, is an acceptable deceit that is widely rationalized as “research” by Gypsy scholars. However, the same claim made “scholar to scholar” within the Gypsy research fraternity has usually been accompanied by raised eyebrows. This was the case with Brown. He attempted to play “the game” of being Gypsy with Gypsy scholars, and his credibility as a serious scholar thereafter suffered. Brown once wrote that “It had not been hard to convince myself of [Gypsy ancestry]; but all the non-gypsies to whom I have told it have simply been amused” (Brown 1924:3).

In correspondence to Gypsy scholar and *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society* editor E. O. Winstedt, dated the same year *Nights and Days on the Gypsy Trail* was published, Brown writes, “In the same way that [Gypsies] have come to believe that they are Egyptians, I’ve almost come to believe that I’m part Rom myself” (Brown 1922b). At best, in Winstedt’s eyes, Brown may have sacrificed some credibility for being a romantic and, at worst, for suffering from delusions. Gropper, previously quoted, remembers almost nothing about Brown, but only his claim to be part Gypsy.

Even Richardson Wright, author of Brown’s obituary in the *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, sums up Brown’s scholarly accomplishments in an anecdote about Brown’s claim to Gypsy blood. It was related to Wright by another Gypsyologist, Professor John L. Gerig of Columbia University. Gerig describes Brown’s first visit to Gerig’s office. Brown introduced himself, insisting that

since he was ‘part Gypsy by descent’ he was perforce interested in the same field and desired my advice. Thereupon I urged him to cultivate this field along with his work in French literature. Though to this day I question his statement that he was part Gypsy, he firmly believed it to be true, so I made use of his conviction in order to encourage him to go on with the work (Wright 1945:2).

It happens that the popular author Konrad Bercovici competed with Brown during the interwar period for the title of “greatest authority in the United States on gypsies” (sidebar in Bercovici 1945:84). Bercovici, an admitted romantic and sensationalist, was generally shunned by Gypsy scholars in the Gypsy Lore Society (which he once joined but then quit). Bercovici indirectly exposed Brown’s weakness as a “counterfeit Gypsy” scholar by writing of himself, “There is not a

gypsy in the world who cannot tell you who I am. I am a gypsy by choice and not by blood, by temperament and not by race." Book sales responded more favorably to Bercovici's braggadocio than to Brown's "black drop." In sum, Brown, the counterfeit Gypsy, ever unsure of and unhappy about who he was, struggled always yet unsuccessfully to inspire the lasting affection of his readers and to win the confidence and respect of his peers.

The Curse of the Unconcealed Weakness

Bercovici may have learned one trick from Borrow that Brown never learned: self-aggrandizement. One Borrow scholar, Robert Meyers, delves into the "flamboyant" Borrow, and focuses on his trait of "amazing self-confidence" (Meyers 1966:61-62). "In his books," writes Meyers, "Borrow continually presents himself as unusually strong, agile, and durable." Examples are ubiquitous, but to relate just one, Borrow tells of spending an entire night in a forest, exposed, and with cold, drizzling rain falling (Meyers 1966:63). He describes himself waking the next morning, stiff and with his hair much matted, yet fit and healthy.

But Brown, while chasing after the "joys and adventures of the Gypsy trail" (Brown 1922a:xi) seems to share his every qualm and discomfort with the reader. This is the curse of unconcealed weakness. For an example, let us join Brown in the back streets of Tangier, in search of "authentic Moorish dancing" (Brown 1922a:136-141). As usual, Brown begins "Borrovia" and boldly, introducing his anecdote by warning the reader:

It is inadvisable to wander off the principal streets [alone] after dark. But guides are annoying, and I preferred to take my chances. One night the lure of mystery took me into the labyrinth of nameless streets of the Sukh ed-Dahl. Like a mousetrap, it was easier to get into than to get out of (Brown 1922a:133).

But in his quest, Brown admits resorting finally to a guide. This unexpected change of plans draws the readers' attention to Brown's naive confidence and lack of self reliance.

He is taken to a secluded house and gains entry with a secret signal. He follows a narrow passage to a private room, reclines on silk cushions, and faces a closed door. An old woman in the room begins beating on a drum. Brown writes, "[The] door opened and the dancer entered. She was nude. On her shapely arms and ankles were a multitude of finely wrought silver rings.... Her youthful features were comely.... The dance consisted of little steps that intertwined in intricate arabesques...." (Brown 1922a:139). At this point Brown entirely forgets the comely

dancer and launches into a detached criticism of her dance, though it was the authentic Moorish dance he had come to experience.¹⁷

Brown proceeds to carp abstractly that her situation is typical for a Mohammedan female in a society which steals a woman's "soul and individuality" and makes of her "simply a blind instrument...trained to stir the souls of [others]" (Brown 1922a:140). Perhaps, but Brown's decision to interject this element of moral correctness suddenly into his adventure narrative at this point has the impact of a cold shower. Especially since his guide has just reported that the dancer has temporarily escaped from a nearby harem at great risk, just for this occasion. That Brown actually believes his guide indicates that he is something of a naif. But to believe it and then to neglect to contemplate any potential for a romantic interlude is not in the adventurous tradition of Sir Richard F. Burton. Instead, Brown's soul in this stimulating and opportune setting is not stirred in the least. In an instant, the harem girl is gone and Brown is "out in the darkness of the crooked alley" (Brown 1922a:140).

But to return to our comparison. Brown's works, like Borrow's, generally reveal "no hint of any personal interest in sexual pleasures" (Meyers 1966:61), but then Borrow is writing for an evangelical audience in a Victorian age.¹⁸ Borrow was a moralizer at a time when moralizing was in style and meant strength of character and virtue. Brown's moralizing and complaining in the context of his times seems excessively pious, inexplicable and awkward; it is interpreted here as a weakness of character that may have contributed to his obscurity.

Nevertheless, A Good Travel Writer

Successful travel writing often reflects the sincere attempt to experience and comprehend another world and its inhabitants. Borrow's published exploits among Gypsies indicate this kind of sincerity because, as Collie (1982: 82) points out, "The fact of ethnic community, not just the idea of it, fascinated him throughout his life." In this way Brown is also authentic.¹⁹ He does his best imitation of Borrow as a keen-eyed travel writer among Gypsies. His first book already reveals varied experiences among them:

I have eaten Christmas dinner cooked by Serbian Gypsies in the fireplace of an old French house in New Orleans; I have lazed through summer days in Wisconsin, in the tents of English Romaničels, watching the shadows make moving patterns on the canvas overhead; and in Pennsylvania I have drunk and feasted with Hungarian Gypsies to the sound of their thrilling music; [and] to mingle with the Spanish Gypsies I have had to go to the Iberian Peninsula (1922a:26-27).

We may not like their outcomes, but Brown's experiences ring authentic. For example, he personally photographed the notorious American Gypsy gangster Tinya Bimbo, and when he writes from experience that Bimbo's daughter "was the only Gypsy who ever cheated me" (Brown n.d.), we want terribly to believe him and to learn the details.

His passports and correspondences verify that he traveled widely and frequently, and his descriptions of the diverse cultural landscapes he encounters appear well crafted and convincing, as in this example:

Across the curving shoreline the moon was dancing on the waters in phosphorescent scales, and shedding its weird unearthly glow on the white walls of Cadiz. It shone too on the *azulejo* dome of the Cathedral, with its glazed tiles gleaming like a great fantastic bubble (Brown 192:72).

Brown gives affectionate, poetic attention to detail, as in Cordova where he describes in admirable alliteration how Gypsies mix a good sangria. "The inkeeper brought a huge pan, a couple of gallons of blood-red wine, sparkling gaseosa, golden oranges, sugar, spices, and snow from the Sierras" (Brown 1922a: 115). In a passage in *Deep Song* (Brown 1929:134) Brown digresses on the etymology and then the virtues of the guitar. "The guitar is the most human of instruments. Even its lines suggest the curves of the human body. One holds it to his breast, and without the intermediacy of bow or keys one's fingers caress the strings."

Brown is at his very best when describing his Borrovian sojourns in a darker mood; when writing, no doubt, under the lingering spell of his adolescent obsession, Edgar Allan Poe. In this example from *Romany Road* (1932:66-67) Brown writes as Pete Brockhaus, fleeing Chicago with Gypsy friends.²⁰

[We] traveled to Gary, where the blast furnaces shot great spouts of flame against the black, smoke-shrouded night; then [camped in] the dune country at the lower end of Lake Michigan.... It was a weird spot at night: giant waves of sand, and gnarled twisted branches of scrub oak. The wind howled in the tossing limbs that stretched skyward as though in agony.

Brown was not only a skilled travel writer like Borrow, but had additional aptitudes, including those of poet and folklorist. He writes of "the happiest and most colorful hours of [his] life, hours spent in the collection folk songs and in penetrating the lives of their makers" (Brown 1929:xi). More than Borrow, Brown was a systematic collector of folk songs, which would seem to place him at the heart of respectable scholarship in the tradition of the Gypsy Lore Society. Instead, he appears to have been marginalized by the gatekeepers of that tradition.²¹

Brown may have been a good travel writer for a popular audience, but the quality of his writing was judged by a different, higher standard by his peers in the Gypsy Lore Society.²² The Englishman T. W. Thompson, for example, reviewed *Nights and Days*, Brown's first book, for the *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*. Included in his comments are these: "[Brown's] perception of things is in advance of his mastery of words and material, with the result that his narrative flags in places and even becomes quite formless," whereupon he remarks on Brown's "hasty composition" and then concludes, "I am inclined to believe that Dr. Brown relies excessively on impressionism" (Thompson 1922:95). If other Gypsy scholars accepted Thompson's opinions, they may not have troubled themselves with reading this or any of Brown's books themselves. Brown later had several of his manuscripts published in the *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, but the potential long-term impact of Thompson's initial criticism on Brown's career cannot be ignored. It should by now come as no surprise that where George Borrow's book have also been described as "formless," they apparently rise above the critique because they "are held together by sheer force of the pervading personality" (Sampson 1970:679).

Biography or Pathography?

Borrow imitators—those who have followed Borrow's example and have imagined themselves as leading a "Borrowian" life—have been common in the ranks of the Gypsy Lore Society throughout its hundred-year history, and perhaps began with Charles Leland himself.²³ Most, as did Leland and Brown, have freely acknowledged Borrow's influence over them. Brown's imitation Borrow, where he became himself a Borrow-like polyglot and author of travel tales and romantic autobiography involving Gypsies, began as a limited success. Unfortunately, it ended in tragic failure for, in quest of wearing Borrow's mantle, Brown squandered his health. This ultimately cost Brown his life.

Brown was no poor imitation of Borrow insofar as his experience among Gypsies was intimate and his knowledge of them detailed. Brown's experience among Gypsies was in fact measurably richer than that of Borrow, for Brown traveled more widely in his search for "local color" than did Borrow, and he met a greater variety of Gypsies as a result. Yet Borrow's life seems so much more adventurous. To evaluate Borrow in the context of Green's *The Adventurous Male* (1993) is to argue that Borrow had the right mix of power in personality and mission to succeed as a travel writer in the Victorian Age. He embodied adventurism and became its icon. On publication of *The Bible in Spain* his life was thereafter fit for biography, which has approached hagiography in some cases. By contrast, Brown's

imitation Borrow achieved some adventure, but was unremarkable without Borrow's power of personality and mission.

On closer inspection, and at the risk of appearing pretentious or unkind, Brown's unremembered life may warrant attention as a possible "pathography." If Borrow was the self-assured "magnificent wanderer" among Gypsies, Brown was certainly the "tragic wanderer" among them, constantly floundering in—while conscious of—Borrow's great wake. What constitutes a pathography, as contrasted to a biography? Joyce Carol Oates has "catalogued the components of pathography as 'dysfunction and disaster, illnesses and pratfalls, failed marriages and failed careers, alcoholism and breakdowns and outrageous conduct'" (in Kaplan 1991:B2). As pathography, Brown's life as an imitation Borrow has the requisite tragic dimensions. His life's chronicle seems doomed to failure from the outset. He resents his childhood, takes some solace in Poe, then discovers and begins to emulate the unmatched Borrow. He becomes a counterfeit Gypsy, marries badly then compensates poorly thereafter, so blinding himself with "local color" in dangerous faraway places that he contracts tuberculosis. He dies slowly, miserably, and alone. And those that thereafter might then have admired or remembered him best for his efforts and skills as a Gypsy scholar, for example the American members of the Gypsy Lore Society, have made of his life the mere scattering of footnotes.

This seems the stuff of good pathography. Irving Brown, a life lived in poor imitation of George Borrow, prefaced with one of his own translations of his favorite *malaguena*:

Who suffers most? Just ask some day
A scholar if he really knows: —
The man who gnaws his flesh away,
Or he who tells the world his woes (Brown 1929:191).²⁴

Summary and Conclusions

Students of Gypsy culture are a culture unto themselves. They form a community of interest—Gypsies—and learn from one another to pursue shared interest through similar practice. The foregoing comparison suggests that Irving Brown pursued his Gypsy studies by following closely George Borrow's pattern and model of success. Once having accepted the Borrovian legend and manner as true, he thereafter attempted to master Borrow's example through scholarship and experience. Thus Brown excelled in foreign languages and followed the adventurous trail Borrow blazed through Spain. Afterwards he wrote picaresque autobiographical narratives in the Borrovian mode. However, much of that which Brown perceived of and accepted uncritically as Borrow's formula for success related to

those aspects of Borrow's alleged physical and personality traits which were innate, for example, stamina, charisma and other qualities that Brown coveted but could hardly acquire through imitation. In spite of all Brown's imitative efforts, the effective difference between himself and Borrow has been summed up by history as the difference between the one's obscurity and the other's renown.

The core of this paper is an interpretation of Brown's relative lack of success relative to Borrow in the context of adventure ideology, wherein Brown and Borrow are compared and contrasted as individual adventure writers featuring Gypsies. The comparative device was used here mainly to demonstrate the potential for revealing how the commonalities of Gypsy Studies culture are propagated by some of its individual members (like Borrow) rather than by others (like Brown) to contribute to the evolution of Gypsy studies generally.²⁵ For example, the urge toward individuality seems to be a commonality among members of Gypsy Studies culture, yet it is the nature of a culture group that there can be no truly unique selves within it. Rather, learning about Gypsies is both a communal and cumulative process within the culture. A progenitor of and originator in the culture like Borrow, "who first gave gipsies a citizenship in English literature" (Sampson 1970:679), is historically positioned to be more memorable as a unique self than is an imitative representative among his progeny like Brown. It is Borrow's likeness, not Brown's, that inspires loyalty and enthusiasm and more easily becomes the icon for a specialized cult of adventure like the Gypsy Lore Society which, for most of its century of existence, functioned also as a cult of national (English) adventure.

The comparative device thus offers insight into the reasons for Brown's obscurity and neglect that the examination of Brown's life and work, treating Brown as if he were a unique self, might not provide. It is through the comparative device that the apparent contradiction in being an obscure yet prolific and interesting adventure writer like Irving Brown can be approached and resolved.

While there is likely to be no single explanation for Irving Brown's neglect there is opportunity for multiple interpretations. The interpretation offered here raises the question of Brown's significance in a way that is likely to provoke a reaction, a useful gambit if it results in alternative interpretations of Brown's life and work. New interest in Brown might also help contribute to a broader understanding of Borrow's place in the evolution of Gypsy studies, in America and elsewhere. Has his role been beneficial or otherwise? In the meantime there are those unanswered questions about Brown's qualities as a writer on Gypsies that remain, for his complete works have yet to be enumerated and evaluated by contemporary scholars.

Irving Brown may yet escape from George Borrow's shadow. Perhaps the combination of traditional approaches and the potential of applying some innovative post-modern humanistic or structuralist approaches to Brown's career and work can yet compensate in the future for his neglect in the past.

Notes

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¹On first discovering Irving Brown and Gypsy studies, I had the great good fortune to be able to study under Walter Starkie at U.C.L.A. Starkie met Brown on at least one occasion, and has introduced him as “a true Romany Rye” (an experienced observer of Gypsies; an aficionado) in his book *In Sara's Tents* (1953). However, Dr. Starkie never mentioned Brown during the course of our many conversations.

²Ascertaining the amount of truth in autobiographic fiction is always difficult: As a reviewer of an earlier version of this manuscript has pointed out, “Brown identifies his books as autobiographical; Borrow pretends they are.” Establishing these authors’ authenticities is an important problem far too complex to come to terms with here.

³It is beyond the scope of this purpose to speculate on contributions to knowledge made by Brown and Borrow outside of travel literature featuring Gypsies, or to provide here beyond a few notations and “References Cited” lists of their published and unpublished works related to Gypsies.

⁴Netherlands Gypsiologist Wim Willems recently claimed before members of the George Borrow Society that “you couldn’t learn much” about Gypsies from Borrow (Wilkins-Jones 1993:2).

⁵Victorian times were notably pretentious and lacking in originality, and it is against the inertia in this backdrop that Borrow’s audacious actions involving Gypsies seem to stand out. In Brown’s era—the “Roaring Twenties”—eccentric types were more common, and many railed against a climate of neo-conservatism. Brown’s own actions, however, can perhaps be best understood as a reaction against his conservative father’s control and expectations.

⁶This sketch of George Borrow’s life is compiled primarily from notes taken during the 1991 Meeting of the George Borrow Society at Wensum Lodge, Norwich, and from the following five biographies: Armstrong, 1950; Meyers, 1966; Jenkins, 1970; Collie, 1982; Williams, 1982. Brown’s biography is based on Brown’s obituary by Wright (1945), and from notes compiled while perusing Irving Brown’s records and materials within the extensive Charles Newton Brown family papers held at the Archives of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin (Mss 231; 24 boxes). The Irving Brown papers in the collection are itemized in an orderly

register. Some items, like photographs, have been transferred into separate collections housed elsewhere, while other materials listed in the register appear to be missing from the Brown collection and unaccounted for. All considered, Brown's references to Borrow in the archives are scattered; adequate to argue that Brown was influenced by Borrow, even to support the tentative hypothesis that he emulated Borrow, but not extensive enough to conclude that he was obsessed with the man.

⁷Meyers (1966) refers to the Borrovian Cult frequently in his book about Borrow. The George Borrow Society as it is presently constituted is not cultish, but represents a victory of the rational over the mystical approach to Borrow's life and work.

⁸A Freudian might argue that Brown's life and work are shaped most by these escapades away from his home and his father. Borrow, on the other hand, respected his father who, being skilled at boxing and an avid reader of the Bible, taught him much about the virtues of physical and spiritual power.

⁹*Gypsy Fires in America* remains on many public library shelves nationwide, and has even been called "a kind of American classic" (Vogel 1976-1977:361). Brown's other three books and especially his last one are harder to find. Many shorter works worth recommending, some published in the *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, include "Children of the Earth" (1927), "Roms Are Doms" (1928), "The Gypsies in America" (1929), "The Mačvaya in California" (1936), and "Gypsies in South America" (1938). This is only a partial list of substantive works in the Brown canon.

¹⁰A similar suggestion was once made by a member of the Gypsy Lore Society, R. M. Hewitt, in his review of Brown's *Deep Song*. "Dr. Irving Brown...offers us in this volume a modern Zincali. [He] could make a strong claim to be the American Borrow" (1930:187). Apparently, Hewitt's insightful comment attracted no criticism, no discussion, nor debate.

¹¹One admirer was the late Victor Weybright. He has written highly of Brown's work but was more intimately acquainted with Brown than most other American Gypsylorists; he married one of Brown's former students at the University of Cincinnati (Weybright 1967:78). Moreover, Brown's name is not entirely unknown among Borrovians, especially those who have also been members of the Gypsy Lore Society at one time or another. Through reading its *Journal* they may have learned something about about Irving Brown, especially since many of Brown's major works describe Gypsy landscapes in Spain where Brown had played pilgrim to Borrovian shrines. Other American Gypsylorists, C. G. Leland and W. I. Knapp for example, are certainly well known to Borrovians, most of whom have been British.

¹²The Archive Container List for this item reads "Notebooks, n.d. (12 volumes)."

¹³ As exploration is to travel, so Burton is in a greater sense than Borrow the epitome of 19th-century adventurous Englishmen. Burton's broad interests also included Gypsies, and he was an early member of the Gypsy Lore Society (Jones 1967:73).

¹⁴ Brown gave his son the middle name of Woodberry. Diary entries indicate that Brown's marital discord and poor health may have permanently strained relations between himself and his son and daughter. No attempt was made to contact Brown's children during the preparation of this article.

¹⁵ Is Brown here enacting the role of "The man who gnaws his flesh away?" See his translation of one of his favorite *malaguenas*, quoted near the end of this paper.

¹⁶ The context of Borrow's comment is a brief account of the near-kidnaping of his brother as a child. Borrow does not identify the culprits as Gypsies.

¹⁷ Brown is similarly dispassionate when approaching the related problem of the origins of Gypsy dance. His works describe first-hand observation of provocative Gypsy dances on several continents, and he speculates about their common origins in the erotic dances of Vedic tradition (Josephs 1983:91). Readers after adventure in Brown's books may wonder how or why he resists the dancer's spell.

¹⁸ Writing autobiographically, Borrow and Brown both concealed their sexual desires for women, although Borrow characteristically establishes his power over women. Green (1993:6) remarks on the "connections between eros and potestas" in successful adventure literature. Indeed, Borrow may have even inserted some eroticism "between the lines." For example, the opening passage in *The Romany Rye* has some subtle eroticism. The scene is in Mumper's Dingle, a quiet grove that Lavengro (Borrow) shares in chaste solitude with his wayfaring female companion Belle Berners. Lavengro is about to make a linch-pin to repair a broken cartwheel.

I lighted a fire of coals and got my forge in readiness. ...Belle...by this time dressed [was] seated near the forge: with a slight nod to her like which a person gives who happens to see an acquaintance when his mind is occupied with important business, I forthwith set about my work. Selecting a piece of iron which I thought would serve my purposes, I placed it in the fire and plying the bellows in a furious manner, soon made it hot; then seizing it with the tongs, I laid it on my anvil, and began to beat it with my hammer, according to the rules of my art. The dingle resounded with my strokes. Belle sat still, and occasionally smiled, but suddenly started up and retreated towards her encampment, on a spark which I purposely sent in her direction alighting on her knee.

¹⁹ There are other dimensions of sincerity. For example, freedom from hypocrisy is a trait worth brief mention in relation to Brown's life and work. In the preface to his *Nights and Days* he expresses his desire to communicate to the reader "something of my love and enthusiasm for these glorious wanderers" (1922:xii).

Yet what are we to make of these comments, communicated in a candid magazine interview seven years later: "Gypsies are so primitive that they still follow the Oriental custom of arranging marriages for their children;" "One can't be too fastidious when he eats with Gypsies;" and "They enjoy nothing better than to take advantage of non-gypsies" (Stein 1929:11)? Assuming that Brown was not misquoted, he seems to betray some of his earlier professed "love and enthusiasm" for the Gypsies. Was Brown a hypocrite? Whatever the answer, sincerity—or the lack of it—cannot much help explain the unfortunate outcome of Brown's entire career. Moreover, traits like insincerity, secrecy, and duplicity may be as apt to add as to detract from a Gypsy-adventure writer's mystique.

²⁰ *Romany Road*, according to Brown, "was intended as a full length portrait of the Nomad Coppersmith Gypsies. ...I let myself go in this novel, as I shouldn't have dared in anything but fiction. The people and incidents are mostly real" (Correspondence to Dora Yates, 9/26/33).

²¹ Although generally neglected, Brown has been cited over the years mainly by folklorists and cultural anthropologists who have found his anecdotal materials useful. As did Brown, some of these scholars approached their Gypsy studies as humanists. One of Brown's contemporaries and critics wrote of his "warm-hearted humanity," but the implication of the comment in the context of the entire text was that Brown was too subjective and unscientific in his approach to Gypsy studies (Thompson 1929:94). Indeed, Brown had the qualitative bent of a humanist, as contrasted to the quantitative bent of a positivist social scientist. This was apparently the result of conscious choice, for he writes, "Sometimes I wonder...if there is not more human truth in a fairy tale than in a statistical chart. Both are symbolic" (Brown 1924:27). Brown's "humanistic" approach to Gypsies and his interpretive and anecdotal writing style would be more highly regarded by social science academics in the post-positivist 1990's, though it was mostly dismissed as romanticism by scientific scholars during the previous five decades. Thus Brown has never been cited for being "the first scholarly observer of Gypsies in North America." This accolade is apparently held by Rena Gropper (Gropper 1975: publisher's description).

²² After persevering for a century as a venerable English institution under English administration and dominated by English membership, the Society headquarters moved to the United States in 1989. It is now under American administration and Americans dominate the membership role. A George Borrow Society was founded in England in 1991 to promote knowledge of his life and works. The Gypsy Lore Society promotes knowledge of Gypsy culture. Membership in the two societies at present scarcely overlaps.

²³ Charles Godfrey Leland (b. 1824), who alternately praised and belittled Borrow (b. 1803), actually claimed Borrow as his mentor. He was perhaps too

contemporary with Borrow to be called an “imitator” of Borrow (Fraser 1990:2; Tinker 1924:259). The interesting question of whether Borrow himself was “unprecedented” is mostly left open here. We recall that Sampson writes it was Borrow who “first gave gipsies a citizenship in English literature” (1970:679). This claim might even be extended to read “English-language literature,” to further establish Borrow’s original contribution to Gypsy Studies. As for his unique place as an adventure icon in travel literature, a fellow Victorian traveler quoted in Jenkins (1970:297) once compared Borrow to “A Second Melmoth,” a horrific Faustian character and Gothic wanderer who shocked readers at the close of the Romantic Age. But then, Melmoth was a fictitious character and not a flesh-and-blood progenitor (see Maturin 1820).

²⁴ *Anda y pregúntale a un sabio, / Cuál es él que pierde más: / Él que comió de sus carnes, / O él que publicó su mal* (attributed to Antonio Chacon by Irving Brown [Brown 1929:191])

²⁵ Consider one commonality, the old practice of non-Gypsies “playing the game” among Gypsies in Spain. Borrow and Brown both adhered to this practice (Brown much more recently) and it persists in contemporary Gypsy studies culture as exemplified in the American Merrill McLane’s *Proud Outcasts* (1987). Publicized as “a scholarly adventure story” featuring Gypsies, McLane’s travel narrative draws heavily on the historically remote Borrow, but makes only one fleeting reference to Brown.

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REPORT

Census Taking in a Bulgarian Gypsy Mahala (Ruse, December 1992)

Alexander Kolev

Drawing on the author's experience as a census enumerator in a Bulgarian Gypsy neighborhood, the present report attempts to describe how the inhabitants responded to the first post-communist census, held after decades of assimilatory government policy. The paper focuses on the ethnic questions included in the census questionnaire, briefly sketching the political debate over them and describing how these questions were answered by census respondents in the Gypsy neighborhood. The census demonstrated that the majority of Bulgaria's Muslim Turkish-speaking Gypsies declare themselves as Turks. This has little effect on the ethnic boundary between these Gypsies and non-Gypsy Bulgarian Turks who resist the incorporation of Gypsies into their population.

Introduction

At the end of March 1993 the National Institute of Statistics announced the preliminary results of the Bulgarian census of December 1992. According to these, 822,000 of the country's 8.5 million population had identified themselves as Turks, and 288,000 as Gypsies. 829,000 spoke Turkish as a mother tongue, and 257,000 gave Romani as their mother tongue. The Muslim population was 1,078,000; and the Christian, 7,373,000.¹ The design of the census and the resulting ethnic figures were the subjects of intense political debate both before and after the enumeration period.

During the years of totalitarian rule in Bulgaria, official policy, especially in the 1970s and 1980s, aimed at building an ethnically homogeneous one-nation

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society. The worst extremes of this policy were the several consecutive waves of forced renaming of individuals that affected the country's Muslim minorities. In accordance with the same policy, the 1975 census minimized minority figures, and the 1985 census did not collect any ethnic data whatever.

The first post-totalitarian census, that of 1992, was eagerly anticipated, especially by those interested in ethnic and minority issues. For the first time since 1975, and under much more favorable political circumstances, questions were included in the census questionnaire dealing with ethnicity, language, and religion (see appendix). At the same time these three categories ("ethnic group," "mother tongue," and "religion") sparked quite a controversy. The argument was over their very presence on the census form. Considering the disturbances caused by the renaming campaigns and their aftermath, and the traditionally sensitive character of ethnic issues in Bulgarian politics, that kind of debate was no surprise. The nationalistic parties, demanding the exclusion of the three questions from the census design, viewed them as posing a potential threat to national security and integrity. The assumptions were, first, that such questions divide the nation by institutionalizing the differences among the citizens and give rise to demands for minority status, cultural autonomy, and eventually political autonomy and separatism; and, second, that the figures for the Muslim minorities would turn out to be high enough to encourage Turkey to act as the protector of the Bulgarian Turks, a role that would result in Turkey's making territorial claims on Bulgaria. There was widespread fear, for example, that Gypsies having Turkish as their mother tongue and a large portion of the Pomak population² would identify themselves as Turks, thus bringing the total number of Bulgarian Turks to well over a million. This could both encourage Turkish nationalism in Bulgaria and provide Turkey a reason to interfere in the country's internal affairs.

Those who advocated including the ethnic questions argued that ethnic data were indispensable for correct decision making in the field of minority problems. It was pointed out that the gathering of information would not change the actual state of affairs. Some supporters of the ethnic questionnaire used the same discourse as their opponents by claiming that their inclusion did not pose any danger, since the actual figures for Turks or Muslims in Bulgaria would prove to be much lower than the mythical 1.5 million.

The controversy started long before the census itself, grew as the census approached, and even became a subject of debate in Parliament. During the census enumeration period, December 4 through 14, tension reached its peak in the town of Yakoruda and the neighboring villages in the Western Rhodopes with a predominantly Pomak population. The Pomaks there not only declared themselves Turks, but also insisted on recording Turkish as their mother tongue, although they speak only Bulgarian. This once again focused the argument on the contentious

question of whether ethnicity is based on objective criteria or is a matter of self-determination.

The statisticians of the National Institute of Statistics, which was responsible for carrying out the census, had adhered to the principle of self-determination, and census takers were instructed accordingly. The enumerators were required to fill in the questionnaires with the responses they were given. No interference with the answer or attempts to influence the interviewee were permitted. However, these instructions applied to the questions on "ethnic group" and "religion," but not to the question on "mother tongue." Here the response was to reflect the actual situation in the household, or, as the official instruction put it, "the best-spoken language habitually used for communication within the family" (National Institute of Statistics 1992:54). With regard to the question on "religion," in case the respondent claimed to be an atheist, the census taker was required to inquire into, and record as an answer, what cultural and religious tradition the interviewee, or his or her family or ancestors, belonged to.

As a protest against an approach that rejected objective criteria for ethnicity and permitted the Pomaks to declare themselves Turks, many Bulgarians in Yakoruda, when asked by the census takers about their ethnic group, claimed to Chinese, Japanese, Eskimos, and so forth. A few days before the census began, the extreme nationalists of the Bulgarian National Radical Party called for a boycott of the census. The number of people who actually boycotted the census, however, was insignificant.

The "ethnic questions," excerpted from the population questionnaire, are:

11. Ethnic Group

Possible responses: (1) Bulgarian, (2) Turkish, (3) Gypsy, (4) Tatar, (5) Jewish, (6) Armenian, (7) Cherkez, (8) Gagaouz, (9) Other

12. Mother tongue

Possible responses : (1) Bulgarian, (2) Turkish, (3) Romani, (4) Other

13. Religion

Possible responses: (1) Orthodox, (2) Catholic, (3) Protestant, (4) Sunni Muslim, (5) Shiite Muslim, (5) Judaic, (6) Armenian-Gregorian, (8) Other

The Ethnic Situation in Ruse

Ruse is a town in northeastern Bulgaria on the Danube River, the border between Bulgaria and Romania. The city is the industrial and administrative center of the region of the same name, one of the nine administrative units of Bulgaria. The only bridge that connects Bulgaria and Romania across the Danube is between Ruse and the Romanian town of Giurgiu. This makes Ruse a transportation hub through which much of the traffic from Turkey to western and northern Europe which had previously passed through Yugoslavia has been redirected.

Ruse has a population of 170,000 people living permanently in the town. The largest ethnic group are the Bulgarians, the other sizable groups being Turks and Gypsies. Each of these numbers about 10,000 people. Around half the Gypsies are Turkish Gypsies who usually call themselves Turks³. The rest are Christian Romani-speaking Gypsies who, unlike the first group, are proud of their Gypsy origins and do not conceal them. When speaking Bulgarian the latter call themselves *tsigani* 'Gypsies' or *bulgarski tsigani* 'Bulgarian Gypsies'. The second denomination emphasizes the fact that they are not *turski tsigani* 'Turkish Gypsies'. The two groups dislike one another, or at least claim to do so when speaking to Bulgarians.

The Christian Gypsies in Ruse live scattered among the Bulgarian population, concentrated more heavily in some parts of the city and absent from others. Most of the Turkish Gypsies are also scattered, while the rest live in a separate Gypsy *mahala* 'quarter'. In Ruse's new housing estates one can find many Turkish and Christian Gypsies dispersed among the Bulgarians in blocks of flats in some of which Gypsies form a majority. Bulgarian families tend to move away from such blocks of flats, complaining of the dirt and noise that the Gypsies allegedly create.

The complex questions of ethnic identification among Gypsy groups in Bulgaria and the relations among them have been analyzed by Elena Marushiakova (1992, 1993) on the basis of ethnographic field research. The interactions of Gypsies' models of Gypsy ethnicity with those of non-Gypsy Bulgarians has been addressed by Vesselin Popov (1993).

I took part in the 1992 census as a census taker in a section of the Gypsy *mahala* in Ruse. This report is based chiefly on my experiences and observations during the ten days of census taking, but occasionally I draw on impressions gained during years of living in a block of flats of mixed Bulgarian, Turkish, and Turkish Gypsy population.

The Renaming of Turkish Gypsies

The Turkish Gypsies were forced to replace their Turkish, or, more properly, Turkic-Arabic, names with Bulgarian ones from 1981 to 1985, following the

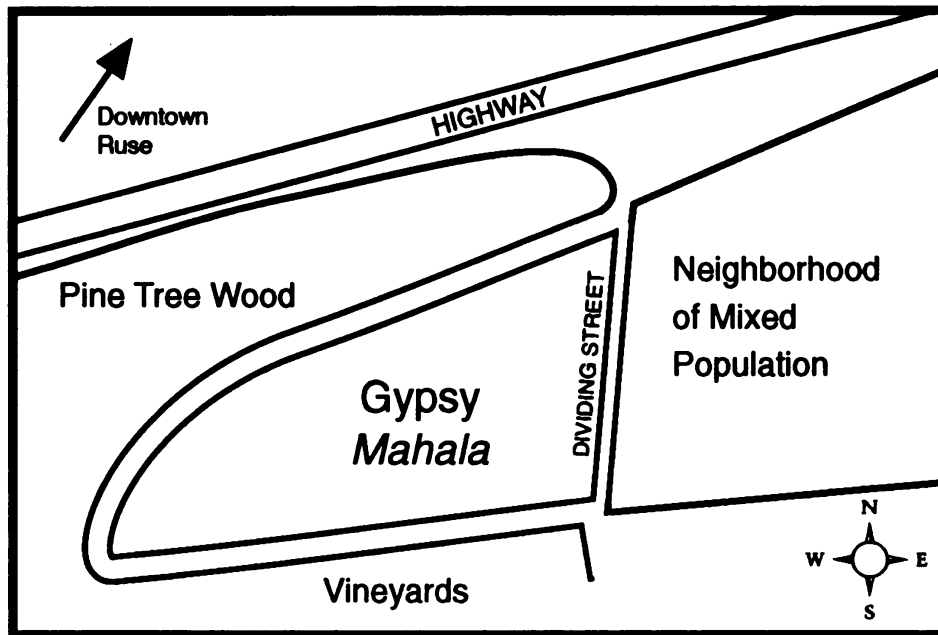
renaming of the Pomaks (1971-1974) but before that of the Turks (winter 1984-1985). This means that in the early 1980s the authorities responsible for renaming had to discriminate between Turks and Turkish Gypsies, both groups being Muslim, speaking Turkish as a mother tongue, and claiming to be Turks. In Ruse the Turks had always looked down on the Turkish Gypsies and refused to accept them as true Turks. There had been very little intermarriage. The new housing estates were still under construction and the Turkish Gypsies were not as dispersed as now, but concentrated in certain areas. The birth registers of the mosques were used to resolve uncertain cases. Although the mosques were in decay and the registers had not been kept for years, they proved useful in tracing the origins of Muslim families who had lived in Ruse for generations. *Hodzhas* had kept records of each Muslim child's ethnic origin, marking the Turks as Turks and the Gypsies as Gypsies (*chengene* in Turkish).

The renaming of the Turkish Gypsies was a gradual process which did not cause the disturbances prompted by the renaming of the Pomaks and the Turks. The Turkish Gypsies were forced to change their names chiefly through threats that they would lose their jobs. The most common question the Turkish Gypsies asked the officials responsible for renaming was, "Why do you force only us to take Bulgarian names? Why don't you force the other Turks?" Their main reason for discontent seems to be that they were not accepted as Turks. This was especially true, I think, for the wealthier Turkish Gypsies, who often display more radically Turkish-oriented behavior.

After the fall of the communist regime, 10 November 1989, the renaming campaigns were renounced, and everyone was permitted to take back his or her Turkish name. While the Turks and Pomaks have restored their names on a mass scale, many Turkish Gypsies still officially preserve their Bulgarian names.

The Gypsy *Mahala* in Ruse

As I have indicated, in addition to living in blocks of flats in the new residential areas, Turkish Gypsies live in the Gypsy neighborhood on a hillside on the outskirts of the city. The *mahala* is bounded by a neighborhood of mixed Bulgarian, Turkish, and Turkish Gypsy population; an area of vineyards; and a small pine-tree wood on the other two sides (see map). The boundary between the *mahala* and the mixed neighborhood is not clear cut. In fact, the closer one comes to the *mahala* from the direction of downtown Ruse, the greater is the percentage of Turkish Gypsies among the residents. Nevertheless there is a dividing street to the west of which Turkish Gypsies are the majority.



The Gypsy Mahala in Ruse

The Gypsy *mahala*, especially the central portions, is markedly overpopulated. There is electricity and running water in the *mahala*, but no sewer service. With a few exceptions, the houses are alike, old, relatively poor, made of either adobe or brick, and in various stages of dilapidation. Some, however, are kept in good repair.

The Census in the Mahala

In the following pages I will try to show how people reacted to the three “ethnic” questions on the census form, to what extent their answers are indicative of the actual ethnic boundaries perceived by the participants on the vernacular level, and the differences between the approaches to ethnicity demonstrated by interviewees in the process of census taking and by political leaders debating on the census. I will also touch on the theme of growing ethnic tension in this Bulgarian Gypsy quarter. Of course, the limited character of my experience in the Gypsy *mahala*, as well as the definition of the situation, that is, my role as a kind of state official, allow me to give only an outsider’s view of the latter subject.

Within the boundaries of the Gypsy *mahala* live some 1000 people of whom about 25 are Bulgarians, not more than 15 are Turks, and about 30 are Christian Gypsies. Though the rest, with some exceptions, declare themselves Turks, their Turkish and Bulgarian neighbors, and popular opinion, consider them Turkish

Gypsies. My enumeration district included approximately one-fifth of the addresses in the *mahala*, scattered throughout the *mahala*. The ethnic distribution, according to popular opinion, of the 175 people living in my district was: 151 Turkish Gypsies, 18 Bulgarians, and 6 Turks. This distribution coincided with the respondents' self-identification except for the group of Turkish Gypsies; 142 of those identified themselves as Turks and only nine as Gypsies. In the following pages I will examine the ethnic groups one by one.

The Bulgarians

The Bulgarian and Turkish houses are in clusters of three or four scattered in the peripheral zone adjacent to the vineyards and the mixed neighborhood. An old Bulgarian woman who was born in the *mahala* and had always lived there told me that 40 to 50 years ago there had been few Gypsies in the area. According to her, the present situation was the result of a gradual Gypsy migration from the countryside, and the Bulgarian and Turkish population was, so to speak, the remnant of a time when the place had not been a Gypsy quarter.

Most of the Bulgarian residents were old-age pensioners whose grown children had moved to other parts of the city. The presence of a few young people living with their parents was apparently the result of housing problems. The elderly Bulgarians had formerly been blue-collar, usually unskilled, workers. Aware of the relative poverty they lived in, some took pride in the fact that their children had better educations and living conditions. There were no working-age unemployed Bulgarians in my district.

The answers of these residents to the three ethnic questions were uniform; ethnic group: "Bulgarian;" mother tongue: "Bulgarian;" religion: "Orthodox." Two old men indicated they were not true believers, but did not object to being recorded as Orthodox.

Recognizing in me a fellow Bulgarian, these people were very hospitable, and I took the opportunity of talking about the ethnic situation in the *mahala*. To my question about the ethnicity of the people living around them, the Bulgarians answered that with the exceptions of themselves and a few neighboring Bulgarian and Turkish families all the rest were Gypsies. Usually only the Bulgarian families were mentioned at first, and I had to rework my question, asking whether there were any "pure" Turks among the Turkish Gypsies. I was then told that indeed there were some, described as very good neighbors. The Bulgarians usually expressed a strongly negative attitude toward the Gypsies.

Bulgarian families living in different parts of the peripheral zone did not know one another. The same holds true of the Turkish families. Of the three Turkish families in my district no family knew the other two; the three did not live close to

one another. Each claimed with some pride that they were the only Turks around, and these claims were supported by the family's Bulgarian neighbors. On the whole, non-Gypsies in the *mahala* seemed to know and associate mainly with their neighbors, particularly the non-Gypsy neighbors.

The Turks

Like the Bulgarians, the six Turks in my district were quite friendly to me, and interviewing them did not pose any problems. With one exceptions, they were elderly pensioners who had done unskilled work. Most spoke broken Bulgarian and very likely were illiterate.

All Turks identified their ethnic group and mother tongue as "Turkish," and said they were "Muslim" by religion. Though not familiar with the census categories "Sunni Muslims" and "Shiite Muslims," they associated the word "Sunni" with the Turkish word *sunnet* 'circumcision' and agreed to be recorded as "Sunni Muslims."

Each of the three Turkish families expressed negative attitudes toward the Gypsies, whom they never referred to as "Turkish Gypsies," but simply as "Gypsies." One of the families asked me how their Turkish neighbors had identified themselves. Upon hearing that the neighbors had declared themselves Turks, the reaction was strongly ironical, though mixed with a kind of condescension and understanding. "So, they claim to be Turks? How funny! But, well, it's understandable; how can they say, 'We are Gypsies'?" The Turks apparently thought that being a Gypsy was shameful. It is worth noting that the relations between these two families were neighborly.

In the second Turkish family I visited, a poor old woman was looking after her grown mentally handicapped son. She said that was what a true mother should do for her child rather than abandoning him in a mental hospital "like the Gypsies do."

The third family, having informed me they were the only Turks around and that the rest who claim to be Turks were Gypsies, emphatically warned me against letting the Gypsies know that I consider them Gypsies. "If you do, they will beat you up right away. They may even kill you!" an old Turkish woman told me. This exaggerated warning is indicative of how sensitive the Gypsies were thought to be on this point.

The Turkish Gypsies

The 151 Turkish Gypsies in my enumeration district can be roughly divided into two approximately equal groups according to their general lifestyles and tendencies in name restoration.

The first group seems to be more radically Turkish oriented. It consists of families most of whom live closer to the mixed neighborhood in houses kept in relatively good repair whose interiors resemble those of ordinary Turkish houses. Judging by the interiors of the homes, a few families appeared to be wealthier than average Bulgarian families. These were mainly those who had taken advantage of the opening of the borders after the fall of the communist regime and had engaged in petty trading, traveling between Bulgaria and Turkey or Poland. These families had as a rule two or three children. The majority of families living in the comparatively wealthier parts of the *mahala* had taken back their Turkish names.

The second group consists of families living in the central and western parts of the *mahala*, most remote from the mixed neighborhood. These families were both poorer and larger, having four children. The houses were small, decayed, and dilapidated; in some there was virtually no furniture other than beds.

Almost all families of the second group had preserved their Bulgarian names. One family had voluntarily changed their names from Turkish to Bulgarian in the 1960s in exchange for advantages promised by the authorities. These Bulgarian names, however, exist only in the passports; for in-group communication only the Turkish names are used, and sometimes next-door neighbors and close relatives appeared not to know one another's official Bulgarian names. (On name behavior among Islamic minorities in Bulgaria, see Konstantinov et al. 1991; and Igla et al. 1991:124-127.)

Only nine of the 151 Turkish Gypsies identified themselves as Gypsies; the remaining 142 declared themselves Turks. In most cases the respondents did so absolutely naturally and without the slightest hesitation. All 142 spoke as a mother tongue the same Turkish as that spoken by the "pure" Turks in the *mahala*. The Bulgarian spoken by the Gypsies in the course of the interviews was usually characterized by a restricted vocabulary and some deviations from normative Bulgarian grammar under the influence of Turkish. The knowledge of the language was proportional to the contact with Bulgarians the Gypsies had had. The worst Bulgarian was spoken by children of preschool age and old women who had always been housewives.

There were no Christian Gypsies⁴ in my district, and all non-Bulgarians I interviewed were Muslims. When asked about their religion, most Turkish Gypsies responded "Turkish." However, if I went on to ask, "Are you Muslims?" the answer was "Yes, we are Muslims." Only a few people identified themselves as "Muslims" without the term having appeared in the question; these were the Gypsies who had officially restored their Turkish names and lived in the wealthier areas. Some young men said that they did not concern themselves with matters like religion; still on being asked whether they were Muslims, they insisted on being recorded as such. On the whole, I am under the impression that the majority of Turkish Gypsies,

whether believers or not, consider “Muslim” (or “Turkish” as a religious label) a defining feature that brings them closer to the Turkish group.

Eight of the nine people who identified themselves as Gypsies belonged to two families living in the poorest part of the *mahala*. The first was an extremely poor family of six whose exact answer to the question about their ethnic group was, “We are Turkish Gypsies.” These people did not know Romani and spoke Turkish as a mother tongue. The explanation of their self-identification as Gypsies may be the family’s poverty that made them prefer to be judged by Gypsy (“low”) standards rather than Turkish (“high”).

The second family was a neighboring and equally poor one consisting of an old woman, her son, and granddaughter. The woman said she was “a Gypsy” and that she did not lie about the matter “like the others do.” She said her father and grandmother had spoken Romani while she had only a passive knowledge of the language and spoke Turkish as a mother tongue. The woman identified her absent son as a Gypsy, but acceded to the granddaughter’s desire to be recorded as a Turkish girl. If the son had not been absent, he might have declared himself a Turk as well, like a family of close relatives living nearby. It is my impression that the old woman did not perceive Gypsy identity as stigmatized, possibly due to her still strong Muslim Gypsy heritage.

The last instance of declared Gypsy origin was the daughter-in-law of a rich Turkish Gypsy. She was not a native of the *mahala* but came from a Muslim Romani-speaking Gypsy community in the countryside. This case exemplifies the difference between “Turkish Gypsies” and “Muslim Gypsies.” The woman stressed the fact that she was not Turkish but “Gypsy,” and described her religion as “Muslim” instead of “Turkish.” As a mother tongue she declared Romani although only Turkish was spoken in her new family and her children were recorded as Turks with Turkish as their mother tongue. Asked why she did not teach them Romani, the woman answered that her father-in-law disapproved of it since he was “a pretentious man,” as she ironically put it. Apparently that woman came from a Muslim Gypsy family with a strong feeling of Gypsy identity and self-esteem, and she by no means felt inferior to the Turks and Turkish Gypsies.

The two groups of Turkish Gypsies in my enumeration district seemed to be in different stages of Turkification. The first, comparatively wealthier, living in Turkish-style houses, who had officially restored their Turkish names, appeared well ahead on this path, their chief obstacle to incorporation into the Turkish group being the “pure” Turks’ resistance. It is uncertain whether the second group of poorer Turkish Gypsies who have retained their Bulgarian names will become incorporated into the Turkish group in the near future. Such an incorporation may not be the Gypsies’ genuine desire, nor their present self-identification as Turks a final option.

On the whole, popular opinion ascribes an indisputable ethnic status to each of the *mahala*'s residents. At the same time, people belonging to different ethnic groups try not to mention ethnicity in their conversations. Both sides feel the delicate and potentially troublesome character of the point. This is especially true with regard to Gypsy ethnicity, which is, in most cases, perceived by one or both sides to be shameful. In the new housing estates one can find Bulgarian and Turkish Gypsy families as longtime next-door neighbors, the Bulgarians never being certain whether their neighbors are Turks or Turkish Gypsies. The reason is not so much the Turkish Gypsies' desire to pass for Turks, as that the Bulgarians would never ask directly about the matter, but are unable to guess the neighbors' ethnic group indirectly. In most cases dark complexion is interpreted as a sign of Gypsy origin, and its absence as a sign of Turkish origin. The physical types in the Gypsy *mahala* ranged from people of conspicuously dark complexions to Gypsies indistinguishable from Bulgarians. Neighboring families of different ethnic groups restrict their interactions to those generally considered "neighborly" and do not interact in other sectors. In the Gypsy *mahala* families have been living together for generations, and each one's ethnic origin is known by the rest.

Ethnic Tension in the Gypsy *Mahala*

The main conflict in the Gypsy *mahala* seems to be between Gypsies and non-Gypsies, though it is prompted largely by social factors.

The relations between Turkish and Bulgarian families living close to one another were very neighborly, while most Bulgarians and Turks spoke of the Gypsies with apparent fear and hatred. The attitude toward the Gypsies remained the same even when some Bulgarians and Turks admitted that their immediate Gypsy neighbors were reasonable people and the relations with them were neighborly. It seems that fear of the Gypsies is rarely connected with the immediate neighbors but concerns children and teenagers from the poorest—central and western—parts of the *mahala*. Several single elderly Bulgarians told similar stories of bands of children coming from this neighborhood in the evening, gathering in front of Bulgarian houses, and swearing, throwing stones at windows, and sometimes entering houses. An old Bulgarian woman said that in such cases she would cry out the name of a Turkish neighbor who would come out with a spade and scatter the children.

Some elderly Bulgarian women complained that the Gypsies had stolen from them. Although they knew who the perpetrators were, the women said that it was useless and dangerous to tell the police since the theft would not be proved and the Gypsies would retaliate. One of the women told me a story of an old Turk who had been severely beaten by the Gypsies.

All Bulgarians who talked about the ethnic tension in the *mahala* said that until three years ago the situation had been tolerable, but since then had been getting increasingly worse. One even asked whether the government was going to crack down on the Gypsies at last.

To understand the present situation, one needs to be aware of the changes that the past three years had brought about. Until the summer of 1990, the majority of Turkish Gypsies worked in Ruse's cannery factories, chemical works, dockyards, and other industrial enterprises. The men were mainly unskilled laborers, steel casters and tinsmiths, while most women were cleaners. The transition to a market economy that began in 1990 caused several consecutive waves of job cuts, as a result of which most Turkish Gypsies lost their jobs. Moreover, since the beginning of the crisis young Turkish Gypsies had not been able to find work on leaving school or discharge from the army. Enterprising Gypsies with some capital managed to set up small businesses of their own, while the majority became totally dependent on welfare money provided by the government, chiefly in the form of unemployment benefits. When the unemployment benefit period expired, the situation grew even worse. During the census period I visited many large Turkish Gypsy families where both parents and grown children were unemployed. Most of them took the opportunity to talk about unemployment and the plight of their families. A young woman's statement that there were no jobs for the Gypsies so that there might be enough for the Bulgarians may be taken as indicative of how the Turkish Gypsies view the employment situation.

The poorer families were hit especially hard by unemployment because they were less likely to establish small businesses of their own and also because they had more children. It was these children and teenagers, who neither went to school nor were able to find work, who were considered particularly aggressive and dangerous. It is worth noting that they were feared not only by the Bulgarians and Turks, but by some Turkish Gypsies as well. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that these recent developments have strongly reinforced the dichotomy between Gypsies and non-Gypsies in the *mahala*.

The Post-Census Debate

After the census the polemic centered largely on the situation in the Western Rhodopes and the Pomak issue. The general public was very sensitive about the Pomaks since they have always been regarded as "pure Bulgarians" and as an integral part of the Bulgarian nation. That a considerable portion of the Pomaks had declared themselves Turks was perceived as a betrayal eroding the nation and a victory for Bulgaria's most dangerous traditional enemy, Turkey.

Though the communist regime had attempted to assimilate them, the Gypsies had never been considered “pure Bulgarians” and an integral part of the nation and therefore received less attention than the Pomaks. Still there was an apprehension that the Turkish Gypsies would add several hundred thousand people to the number of “pure” Turks.

Following the census, the debate focused on the figure 822,000 for the Turkish population. Politicians of the nationalist Fatherland Labor Party claimed that a survey conducted by their party showed that about 300,000 of the 822,000 who had declared themselves Turks were not “true” but “false” Turks, namely Pomaks (about 100,000) and Gypsies (about 200,000). The “true” Turks were estimated to be about 500,000. By contrast, the representatives of the Bulgarian Turks’ party, the Movement for Rights and Freedom, argued that such an interpretation of the figure 822,000 rejected the right of self-identification, and they insisted that all who had declared themselves Turks be regarded as such. The latter approach was exceptional since most of the parties debating the census results agreed that there was, or stressed the existence of, a difference between some people’s self-identification and their actual ethnic membership.

Conclusions

The discourse of the Bulgarian political parties displayed two alternative approaches towards ethnicity. The first equated self-identification with ethnic membership, while the second distinguished between the two, and sought objective criteria for ethnicity. The choice of an approach was prompted largely by political considerations. The advocates of the second approach, for example, argued that the Pomaks were Bulgarians since they spoke Bulgarian, but dismissed the fact that the Turkish Gypsies spoke Turkish.

Vernacular discourse, as expressed by census respondents, paid little attention to defining features like language, but nevertheless did not confuse self-identification with actual ethnic membership. The latter was viewed as determined largely by factors beyond one’s will. People’s identity was structured not only by what they thought of themselves but what others thought of them as well.

The group of the Bulgarian Turks has demonstrated how the two approaches towards ethnicity could be applied on different levels, for different purposes, but simultaneously and by members of one ethnic group. The Turkish political leaders aimed at incorporating into their political domain as many people as possible, and therefore supported the principle of self-identification as a criterion of actual ethnic membership. By contrast, on the vernacular level, the Turks rejected the incorporation of Gypsies, applying a view of ethnicity that disregarded self-identification.

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Notes

¹ The Pomaks (who number about 270,000) were not listed separately since most had identified themselves either as Bulgarians and Muslims by religion or as Turks.

² The Pomaks, or "Bulgarian Mohammedans" are descendants of Bulgarians converted to Islam during the centuries of Ottoman rule in Bulgaria.

³ Here the term "Turkish Gypsies" refers to those Muslim Gypsies in Bulgaria who speak Turkish as their mother tongue and usually declare themselves Turks. They are to be distinguished from the Muslim Romani-speaking Gypsies groups in Bulgaria who identify themselves as Gypsies; in this paper I use the term "Muslim Gypsies" for the latter (see Igla 1991: 121).

⁴ The Christian Gypsies in the *mahala* identified themselves as Gypsies and Orthodox Christians, with Romani as their mother tongue.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Gypsies: The Forming of Identities and Official Responses. David Mayall, ed. Special Issue of *Immigrants and Minorities*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (March 1992). 104 pp. \$15 (paper). (Distribution: Frank Cass and Co., Ltd., Gainsborough House, 11 Gainsborough Road, London E11 1RS, UK.)

Aparna Rao

In the past thirty years numerous academic and non-academic publications on “Gypsies” have dealt variously with the question of “Gypsy” identity. The present work is yet another addition to this fairly long list. The title of this special issue of the journal *Immigrants and Minorities* appears to translate the concern of the five contributors with the delineation of the ways in which not just one, but several “Gypsy” identities have come into being and with the responses of officialdom to each one of these processes of identity formation. Thus, even though the title does not spell it out clearly enough, the reader expects descriptions and analyses of the growth of endogenous identities and of the corresponding official responses. In other words, one expects consideration of identity formation within various “Gypsy” groups at different periods of time—no doubt within the context of identities imposed on these communities by other populations—and of the official responses to these subtle and complex processes. While the editor’s introduction leaves no doubt that the identities dealt with are those “constructed and then reproduced by outsiders” (p. 1), the functions and mechanisms of “responses”—to what, how, and why—remain disappointingly vague, at least in the first two chapters.

Apart from the editor’s introduction, the volume contains five chapters authored or co-authored by scholars from Europe and the United States well established in the field of Gypsy Studies. The volume concludes with a “select

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guide" of 19 works for "further reading," and a list of 11 Gypsy organizations, all but two in Britain.

The brief introduction makes no attempt to consider the various chapters as a whole, nor does a general concluding chapter bind the contributions into a conceptual framework. The editor restricts himself to the remark that all the contributions "share a similar concern with the determinants of Gypsy identity and responses to the group from majority society" (p. 2). Again one may ask whether identity is a purely exogenous phenomenon and whether all determinants are always and everywhere imposed from the outside. Indeed one of the major weaknesses of the entire volume is the lack of clarity with which most of the chapters deal with the analytical concept of ethnicity. Logically there cannot be any "...ambiguity in the application of the label of 'ethnicity' and fixing the boundaries of the group" (p. 22). "Ethnicity" is not a label, nor does it in any manner "fix boundaries." On the contrary, the very essence of the concept of ethnicity is one of change, of a process of variation in which boundaries are forever being made and remade, constructed and de-constructed. Only in the final chapter (p. 82) is this flexibility mentioned, and then only implicitly.

While the last three chapters may be considered interrelated thematically—all deal with "Gypsies" and/or caravan dwellers in Holland—and in their approaches, the first two chapters diverge greatly from one another and from the rest. Although individually interesting, they detract from the overall coherence of the volume.

David Mayall's paper (Chapter 2), "The Making of British Gypsy Identities" in the past 450 years aims at "...broadly...locating...issues of definition and representation within their historical context and English experience" (p. 23). Hancock's aim in the first chapter, "The Roots of Inequity: Romani Cultural Rights in Their Historical and Social Context," is more diffuse; he touches upon a number of issues which he feels impinge on the question of "...the cultural rights of the Romani populations..." (p. 12). His treatment of the question of civil rights is sadly superficial, and he could and should have analyzed it in order to make his arguments more forceful. It is to be regretted that he does not critically discuss recent publications on many of the issues he raises. While very rightly criticizing much "academic" work on Romani populations, he fails to take cognizance of studies which corroborate his views.

Unfortunately neither Hancock nor Mayall provide new data on the question of "Gypsy" identity. But in his essay, Mayall, who teaches history, does put together chronologically the various phases of "labeling" "Gypsies" in Britain have been subjected to. An analysis of these data would have considerably enhanced the value of the paper.

The aim of the third paper, co-authored by Annemarie Cottaar, Leo Lucassen, and Wim Willems, is to discuss "...the impact of various acts and regulations

directed at gypsies in the Netherlands" (pp. 42-43). This discussion provides the reader unfamiliar with the Dutch scene with several facts not so far widely published in English. However, even here the analysis falls short of expectations. The authors write

The absence of a stigmatizing label during the first decades of their stay [in the Netherlands] even allowed some of [these horse-dealers] to obtain Dutch nationality. Because of this silent 'Dutchifying' the Administrator for Border Control...decided, in 1928, to start a campaign against these horse-dealers, who by this time were definitely labelled as 'Gypsies' (p. 44).

Why was there no stigmatizing, one wonders, and if there was none, how did the group become "definitely labeled as Gypsies"? If there was no stigmatizing, why did the government decide to prosecute the horse dealers? Such a passage, full of interesting and important information, needs much explanation, but the explanation is entirely missing.

A fairly short paper, "The Image of Holland: Caravan Dwellers and Other Minorities in Dutch Society," by Cottaar and Willems, is certainly the strongest in this volume. Here these authors "...restrict [themselves] to the self-definition of contemporary caravan dwellers and to the images that dominate their view of the *burgher* society" (p. 69). From this interestingly written piece one can note similarities between caravan dwellers and certain "Gypsy" populations, not only in the images they entertain of themselves and others, but also in details such as self-employment patterns, housekeeping norms, and gender relations.

The final paper, by Wim Willems and Leo Lucassen, bears the title "A Silent War: Foreign Gypsies and Dutch Government Policy, 1969-89." Here the authors suggest that "...stigmatization can stimulate group formation—and along with it ethnic consciousness..." (p. 83). This suggestion is important for the study of all minorities everywhere, and if followed up could perhaps lead to interesting work on situations of conflict, repression, and rebellion. Willems and Lucassen also discuss the idea of culture as something static—an idea which has had grave consequences in both the academic and non-academic worlds.

Contents: David Mayall, "Introduction," pp. 1-2; Ian Hancock, "The Roots of Inequity: Romani Cultural Rights in Their Historical and Social Context," pp. 3-20; David Mayall, "The Making of British Gypsy Identities, c. 1500-1980," pp. 21-41; Annemarie Cottaar, Leo Lucassen and Wim Willems, "Justice of Injustice? A Survey of Government Policy Towards Gypsies and Caravan Dwellers in Western Europe in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," pp. 42-66; Annemarie Cottaar and Wim Willems, "The Image of Holland: Caravan Dwellers and Other Minorities on Dutch Society," pp. 67-80; Wim Willems and Leo Lucassen, "A Silent War: Foreign Gypsies and Dutch Government Policy, 1969-89," pp. 81-101.

Milyen Út Vár Rájuk? The Gypsy Road. Rachel Guglielmo. Nagykanizsa, Hungary: United States Peace Corps and Amalipe Society for the Preservation of Culture and Tradition, 1993. 74 pp. Free (paper). (Distribution: Rachel Guglielmo, Gandhi Foundation, János utca 11, Pécs 7621, Hungary).

David J. Nemeth

Rachel Guglielmo was recently a Peace Corps Volunteer assigned to teach English in Nagykanizsa, a city in southwestern Hungary. There she was befriended and introduced to Gypsy life in Hungary by Ferenc Orsós, "a local Gypsy leader" (p. 24). In May of 1992 Guglielmo submitted a successful grant request for community development funds through the Peace Corps Partnership Program. She proposed to conduct a survey of the Gypsy "situation" in the nearby town of Zalakomár. Gypsies there form 30% of the total population of 3000. The Gypsy Road is her final project report, an innovative and attractive book with English and Hungarian text on facing pages.

"Who are the Gypsies and where are they headed?" This is the report's recurring theme, foreshadowed both in its title and in its charming cover illustration of a peripatetic Gypsy child. An introduction to the project is provided by Orsós, following Guglielmo's brief preface. Orsós was the Gypsy community leader officially requesting the project, and as project organizer had primary responsibility for its success. He details the background to the project and its ultimate objective, to "paint a more realistic picture of the Gypsy community, for ourselves and for others" (p. 2). Orsós also provides some important local historical facts that enable readers to understand better the Gypsy problem in Zalakomár. For example, the ancestors of Zalakomár's "several different Gypsy groups...: the Lovári (Oláh Gypsies), Szinti, Beás and Romungro (Hungarian Gypsies)" (p. 2) may have begun to settle in the region in the mid-eighteenth century, eventually claiming separate locations on the town's outskirts. A government resettlement program in 1970 forced members of these distinct groups of Gypsies to abandon their own peripheral settlements and move to randomly assigned locations within the town, where they are today still interspersed. Disunited though neighbors, "The different [Gypsy] factions in Zalakomár have little respect for or confidence in each other..." (p. 4) and this remain a minority people powerless to overcome conditions of deprivation maintained by powerful majority anti-Gypsy prejudice.

In the next section of the report, Guglielmo documents the anti-Gypsy prejudice "that is often openly expressed by Hungarians" and which is "unapologetic

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and widespread" (p. 24). She offers numerous examples that represent a cross-section of Hungarian opinion regarding Gypsies. These are direct quotations, separated in the report into three categories of questions. 1) Who are the Gypsies? (Example response from a high school student: "They are mischief-makers, bullies, immoral, unpleasant, live separately, have a low intelligence, and are poor, lazy, and untidy.") 2) Is there a Gypsy problem in Hungary? (Example response from a university student: "The main problem is that they don't belong here. They don't belong anywhere.") 3) Are there any possible solutions? (Example response from a high school teacher: "It's always the Hungarians who are expected to do something about this problem. We've done enough for the Gypsies already. What can the Gypsies do for themselves?") Guglielmo concludes that it is such unrelenting prejudice that forces Gypsies to the margins of Hungarian society and is the "root cause of the observable reality of discrimination in jobs, education and housing" (p. 24).

The Zalakomár Gypsy survey forms the heart of the report. Orsós directed a multicultural survey team comprised of Peace Corps Volunteers, Hungarian student translators, and Hungarian sociologists Zsolt Csálog and Livia Szabó. With the cooperation of Zalakomár Gypsies—the Zalakomár Fii cu Noi Beás organization and János Kövari of the Phralipe organization are named as community organizers—and local officials, the survey team had direct access for several days to the town's "isolated [Gypsy] community of which we had heard much, but experienced little" (p. 24). 52 Gypsy families were interviewed and "received our groups with a great deal of cooperation, hospitality and willingness to share their experiences" according to Guglielmo (p. 24). She adds, "We made no pretense of conducting a full-scale, sociological survey." Survey topics included home and family; work/employment; health; social issues; culture; school/education. Appropriate photographs of Zalakomár Gypsies and their living conditions accompany this section.

The report concludes with a section on the greater historical, political and social context of the Gypsy problem in Hungary. Guglielmo draws on secondary sources here, mainly Liégeois' *Gypsies and Travellers* (1987) and several chapters of *The Gypsies in Eastern Europe* (1991). Appended to this section is a local Gypsy folk tale, "The Origin of Lake Balaton," and a Gypsy folk song, both presented in Hungarian. The endpaper is a photograph of Orsós and Guglielmo placing flowers at the foot of a monument to the Gypsy victims of the Holocaust in Nagykánizsa.

By coincidence, *The Gypsy Road* arrives at the 100th anniversary of the Hungarian Gypsy census of 1893 (1992 [1895]). That census aspired to lay the groundwork for modern social engineering and a successful Gypsy assimilation policy. Guglielmo's ad hoc humanistic survey report suggests instead a post-modern spirit of promoting pluralism in Hungary through Gypsy empowerment.

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Information for Contributors

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Editorial board

Victor A. Friedman, Matt T. Salo, Carol Silverman, Anita Volland

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When Offenders Became Delinquents: Changes in Swedish Tinker Identity

Birgitta Svensson

The experience of groups like the Swedish Tinkers (Tattare) in their encounter with the exercise of power in different periods has given them a cultural identity that has been surprisingly consistent through time. This identity was created both by society's segregation and constructed by the Tinkers, who refused to subordinate themselves to prevailing norms. The history of relations between Tinkers and majority institutions is here traced to the eighteenth century with its society in motion. In the nineteenth century increased proletarianization and social unrest gave rise to a new discourse and identity formation in modern society. Tinkers became a problem at the state level during the construction of the Swedish welfare state, which abandoned the "problem" after 1954. The discussion is based on documentary research, tracing seven generations in two families of Tinkers.

The Swedish Welfare State and the Tinker

In the early twentieth century the mass media, police authorities, the state, science, and literature described the life of the Swedish Tinkers¹ as something that had to be suppressed if the new welfare state was to be built. Social policies were designed to sort the people who were to receive assistance from those who were to be eliminated. Individuals were compelled to adapt. The new population policy made a distinction between adequate and inadequate citizens.

No other group was singled out as such a threat to the realization of the welfare state. Many of the problems which the powers wanted to see solved in the 1930s and 1940s were projected on the Tinkers. Their strategies of resistance were so clear that Tinkers were depicted as the Other which could be contrasted with

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everything desirable. Yet this opinion was not primarily shaped by those who were affected by the Tinkers' alleged way of life, but by those who claimed to know what was morally right. They wanted the Tinkers counted and incorporated in a central register to facilitate measures taken against them by the authorities. Many inquiries, inventories, and registers were in fact made, but much of the welfare program had been hammered out by the early 1950s, and interest was no longer focused on the Tinkers.

With the 1930s as my starting point, I have gone back in time to find out how the Tinkers were segregated and singled out as a problem in earlier days.²

Theoretical Points of Departure

It is not my intention to describe Tinker culture from within, but to show how people spoke about them in various contexts. I have attempted to assemble as diverse a body of material as possible, in order to reflect the different ways of speaking about Tinkers, to contrast them and show how they interact. It is the relation between these discourses that creates identity, not the true properties of particular people or life-styles.

I focus on the way Tinkers played with justice on three levels. They encountered (1) the exercise of power by the state, public debate, legislation, and so on; (2) local power as implemented by state officials such as judges, priests, policemen, and so on, and the debate in the press and descriptions in literature; (3) the picture of Tinkers shaped by the way ordinary people spoke about them, communicated to us in sources in the folklife archives and testimony in the court records.³

The Swedish Tinkers are a clear example of a way of life which arose out of and was shaped by socializing structures in society. Those who built up this way of life were of course highly active in defining their own Tinker culture, in manipulating, mocking, challenging, testing the limits for what was possible. Yet they did not create their history themselves, as freely acting subjects. In this they are like the witches—without the talk of Tinkers there would have been no Tinkers (cf. Henningsen 1980).

The Tinker is both what the context makes him— that is, an object—but he also represents an identity built up by an individual, as a frame within which he acts, as a subject.

He is a "good enemy" in the same way as Nils Christie and Kjetil Bruun (1985) have described drugs. This enemy looks strong and dangerous, but is actually weak. He represents evil and often appears in the form of an entire group, but he does not really threaten any power in society. Those responsible for the struggle against this enemy can feel safe. They can take powerful measures against him, but he

himself must also be so cunning and powerful as to constitute a real threat. The strategy for the exercise of power is to define the enemy vaguely. He has to be sufficiently distinct to be able to be combated, but indistinct enough so that one is not sure whether or not there are more in the background.

Outsiders' norms differ from those current in society, but they also help to reinforce them. This makes the outsiders menacing but also useful. The freedom that the Tinkers managed to retain was possible because they had no honor to lose *vis-à-vis* the general order. This meant that they could mock the established rules at little risk. At the same time, however, they had to defend the honor that maintains outsiderhood.

The differences emerge clearly not just in relation to something considered uniform and normal. Identities are shaped in the interaction between society's objectivization of persons and groups and the subjectivization of which people themselves are capable. Outsiderhood and identities that differ considerably from prevailing patterns are culturally and historically determined. Even though the Tinker identity is a social construction, it is a contrastive identity in the same way as ethnic identity.

My analysis of the social and cultural construction of outsiderhood is based on Michel Foucault's works. His analyses of the development of cognitive systems can be summed up in the three concepts of apparatus, technique, and discourse. In *Madness and Civilization* (1965), for example, these three concepts correspond to three social groups: the insane, the practicing professionals, and the scientists. These three groups presuppose each other's existence. The scientists build a scientific discourse out of theories and facts about the object. This becomes a system of categorization on the basis of which the objects can be sorted, which in turn facilitates differentiated methods. The methods are applied by professional experts. As a result of sorting and differentiation, the apparatus tends to confirm the prevailing order. There is an interaction between the social and cognitive levels in that (1) a problem is identified; (2) the scope of the problem is determined; (3) a social group is delimited; (4) an expert group works with the problem. The Tinker becomes one such social construction, a "problem." The construction becomes an identity on the basis of which the Tinker then acts.

Cultural identity is articulated in encounters in different arenas, where the identity, the norm, and actual life are shaped, challenged, tested, and changed. To obtain knowledge of the way the Tinker identity is shaped, then, one must find the places where it emerges. Since the courtroom is one arena where this identity is made clear, I have elected to study it. Here the Tinker is used as the "body" on which the state can exercise its ideological power. The state uses the Tinker to govern the citizens. The Tinkers' deviant behavior serves to formulate the norms and rules

which should not be broken. Since they transgress the bounds of the permissible, they test the rules and show how they are to be formed.

The starting point for my analysis is that there is a relation of power in which a struggle is waged to decide which values and norms are to be the guiding principles. I base my study on the power analysis used by Foucault, where subordination includes both liberty and coercion. Foucault argues that power works in the form of both subordination and subjectivization, that is, a person is both constituted as an object and constitutes himself as a subject on the basis of a social practice.⁴

Outsiders and Moral Conformism

I followed the course of history by constructing life stories of individuals in two families generation by generation. These constructions are based chiefly on parish registers and on what Tinkers themselves told of their lives in court records.⁵ Parallel to this I describe the way these Tinkers have been viewed in different historical contexts, on different levels.⁶

In times of change, outsiders stand out with particular clarity. New ideals are manifested in the struggle against marginal ways of life like that of the Tinkers. Since in the 1930s attention was drawn to the Tinkers as a special problem; this led to a dramatic increase in their number. They were depicted as a dark threat to the bright Swedish "home for the people" that was being built up. There were at that time two families in Sweden who were especially singled out as Tinkers by the national and local authorities, by the legislature and the judiciary, and by the communities in which they lived.⁷ These families accepted the Tinker identity that was ascribed to them and elaborated it with unusual vigor. It is these families for whom I have compiled biographies.⁸

The Tinkers had the chance to show resistance by virtue of being outsiders. The norms of the outsider are unlike those of established society. It is this which makes them a threat. They live outside the general order, and they are not affected by the moral rules that apply to others. The freedom which they manage to retain is due to the fact that they have no honor to lose. They can afford to mock the prevailing morality.

Outsiderhood is not just about segregation, the exercise of power, disciplining, and pressure exerted by society. There is also counter-pressure and a resistance struggle, and they are predicated upon each other. Resistance can be developed parallel to participation in the "cultural premises" of society (Mathiesen 1965).

I have distinguished two historical situations which were different for the Tinkers, one that prevailed in the eighteenth century, and one that arose in the first half of the nineteenth century and took firm shape in the latter half of the century.

The Court as an Arena for Power and Resistance

The law expresses the normative will of a society. It is in the encounter with its administration that I have sought my material. The trial proceedings of the hundred courts (*häradsrätter*) do not deal chiefly with how many crimes of what kind were committed, nor about who committed crimes and how they were punished. Instead they describe the way local people viewed the Tinker; through the testimonies of the witnesses. They describe how the local power handled the Tinker, and they record the Tinker's own description of his life. With the aid of the ample body of court records it is possible to reconstruct the points of contact where the conflicts were enacted.⁵

The detailed accounts in the court records enable us to detect the formation, testing, and change of both the exercise of power and the resistance struggle.

Tinkers in Eighteenth-Century Society

The conditions that prevailed in eighteenth-century society had probably existed for a long time previously. However, the age was now characterized by the discussion of new concepts such as liberty and public utility. Tinkers at this time traveled around the country in large bands under the protection of passports as enlisted soldiers and glass peddlers. Their everyday life, however, appears to have consisted more of subsistence activities incidental to traveling—demands for food and accommodation under threat of revenge—than of any actual work they carried out.

Being continually on the move gave them several different possibilities for making a living, and made them inaccessible to the control of society. On the other hand, their mobility made them a threat to the peasantry, who greatly feared this unstable element.

The roving bands of Tinkers demonstrated their power *vis-à-vis* the stationary peasants by traveling on horseback in large, colorful bands. They resembled the suites of retainers escorting noblemen in the Middle Ages, and they may have symbolized an ability to rank above others. Their association with horses can also be seen as a demonstration of power; the horse was a symbol of high status for the ruling class.

The discourse about Tinkers in the eighteenth century mostly consists of descriptions of them as alien and dangerous. Treacherous and dastardly deeds were constantly ascribed to them. Perhaps there was still a widespread belief in magic and witchcraft; the difference between vagrants and witches was not great.

If they were sentenced in court it was to the pillory and other punishments intended to instil a sense of shame; this must have seemed relatively mild to people

who were already outsiders and familiar with shame. The Tinkers played against justice and won. They had access to society, but society was not always able to get at them.

Now Tinkers were segregated for partly new reasons. They were stereotyped as an ethnic "nation," which was typical of the times. This segregation largely took place at the level of the state. At the other levels they were depicted as the alien Other.

It was usually the women who were supposed to be evil and dangerous. It was thought that they were in secret league with the devil. This was in some respects the age of the *Hustavla*, Luther's *tabula oeconomica*, or domestic commandments. In Luther's doctrine, man should not disregard an order over which he has no authority. He should accept the conditions in which he has been set, know his place, and "meekly continue to toil in the place where he has been set to work." The prevailing order must be safeguarded. God wants tranquillity and resists all change. Restlessness and challenges lead to chaos and are the work of the Devil, to be rejected by all true Christians. The Devil represented movement and change. He was "an in-between being," with "a sort of transitional character, expressing possibility, change, impermanence." Stories of how the Tinkers made agreements with the Devil continued to circulate until relatively recently.

Tinkers in a Time of Diffuse Resistance and Fragile Power

In the early nineteenth century Sweden was no longer a nation at war, and it was unusual for Tinkers to have soldiers' titles. Their occupational identity was instead mainly associated with activities involving horses.

Society was changing radically. Both the church and the aristocracy had a weaker position, whereas groups such as peasants and the bourgeoisie had strengthened their positions. The growing bourgeois class tried to assert their political influence as much as their economic and social influence. The changes were expressed in the liberal critique of society in the press, which advocated humanitarian reforms of child-rearing, education, poor relief, and the view of crime and punishment. There was also room in this debate for the women's question.

Sweden's population almost doubled between the start of the century and the 1860s, and it was mostly the lower classes which accounted for the growth. At the same time, this growing mass started to question conditions of employment, poor relief, and the judicial system. This was hotly debated in parliament and the press, by people who saw a rising threat from below. There were calls for the introduction of new systems of control.

Moral concepts were at this time defined more in terms of honesty than honor and more on diffuse and informal grounds than on strictly formal grounds decided

by laws and ordinances. It is the dishonest person that is condemned, not the offense of which he is guilty. Errors are not corrected by harsh repression; power is instead exerted in more dimensions. The aim is to educate people so as "to refine human nature." Poverty, laziness, and uselessness are to be eradicated by means of "book learning and moral education, combined with physical force."

In this nascent modern society, both power and resistance have changed character. Formal control is no longer distinct. There is a widening distance between different social groups. At the same time, the authority of the master of the household is questioned. Stratification in the countryside leads to the rise of new identities, which makes it more difficult for the traditional leaders of society to maintain the norms. The social structure is changed from having been steered by laymen in the villages to become the charge of "experts," which undermines the world-view based on Luther's doctrine.

The age also bears the stamp of a passion for the pure, unspoiled "folk" and romantic accounts of folklife influenced by Herder's ideas about the national spirit. New concepts such as "folk tradition" are coined.

This diffuse period of transition from classical peasant society to modern society resembles the transition period in the 1930s when the Tinkers were set up as a problem and demarcated as a distinct group. In the debate at the start of the nineteenth century they were used in the social debate as an example of individuals who had been spoiled by society. People discussed how the Tinkers could be restored to society and how other people could be prevented from ending up in their situation.⁹

At the level of local power, however, there was a struggle with justice which was very similar to that in earlier times. In one trial after another the local servants of justice tried to win the struggle, but they were bested by the Tinkers.

The state tried to combat vagrancy by making it a crime. Yet formal control was not particularly effective, and informal control was dissolving. It was still the Tinkers who had the upper hand in this game, while the authorities were fairly powerless in comparison. The Tinkers lived in a closed world with their own norms, their own districts, their own recruitment, and even their own language. From having previously acted behind a soldier's identity, they now acquired a more distinct identity of their own with occupations that only they had, and new opportunities to use their identity more actively. The Tinker women did not submit to the rule of the master of the household; they traveled around the country and made a living as they saw fit. It was they who governed the families.

In the folk narrative tradition the Tinkers are incorporated into a hierarchical society. Their place is at the very bottom, but they are now people with names and a service to perform—that of knacker and gelder—a service that was needed in the community.

The Tinkers themselves told the people on the farms magnificent stories about their origins. In this they were successful. They created origin myths about themselves which survive to this day. Many stories in the folklife archives, for example, tell how the Tinkers came to Sweden after the European wars of Karl XII (1697–1718). Or they tell of how the Swedish king had negotiated with the king of the Tartars to borrow men for his war efforts. When the king was going to hand them back after the war, however, he was told to keep them, “and that is how they remained in Sweden.” Many stories say that they came from Tartary in Russia, and almost all accounts give them an eastern origin. The myths always contain something about how they were descended from Tartar kings, giving them higher status or making them better than other people. The stories of Tartars, or Tartary, seem intended to offer an explanation for the term *Tattare*.

This game played with the common people in Sweden was successful in many respects. The Tinkers were seen as a threat. They were given whatever they asked for, and they also contributed to entertainment in a community by performing music, fortune-telling and black magic, as well as by slaughtering and castrating animals.

In court they vehemently denied the crimes of which they were accused. Not being permanently settled in the community, they were not always under the control of the priest or the constable, but the local people recognized them, and they had certain nodes in their network which served as meeting places. The local populace, being afraid of them, were reluctant to inform on them or testify against them in court.

The Tinker in Modern Society

In modern society, beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, more and more people are marginalized, and society's disciplining formations simultaneously work intensively to incorporate outsiders. The interplay between society's normalization strategies and the Tinkers' counter-strategies creates not only the normalizing power but also the resistance and the Tinker's identity. What happened, then, to the Tinker's identity when modern society's ideas were transformed into a new social order, confirmed both in laws and in everyday habits, attitudes, and conceptions?

Society's strategies seek to make the Tinker an individual case, to be treated and corrected. There are normative assessments of how it is envisaged that the Tinker can be incorporated in society. The “modern Tinker” is shaped in society's resolute socialization, which aims to make him internalize a sense of guilt and remorse.

Society's civilization of the citizens is no longer based on shame but on guilt. Disciplining is achieved more by inner than by outer coercion. Condemnation should preferably come from the guilty person himself. Whereas coercion was formerly external and distinct, it is now diffuse but ever present. Power seeks to turn the Tinker into a useful citizen.

But the disciplining of the Tinker has two targets. It also has a normative effect in that it teaches other people not to live the kind of life led by the Tinkers. The Tinkers are used as a yardstick.

Since society strives to treat them as individual cases, the Tinkers' counter-strategies develop from collective to more individualized action. There is, however, a well-established collective to return to, derive nourishment from, and refine methods in.

They have to act more in concert with the people around them, which is both a threat and an opportunity for them. Society exercises power more subtly, with more diversified adaptation strategies. From having rarely or never been sentenced for the crimes they committed, they now feel the severity of society's efforts to discipline them.

When we meet Tinkers in the local courts in the eighteenth century, they are in large, foreign bands temporarily passing through. When we see them in the dock in the first half of the nineteenth century, they are recognized by the local populace, even though they are rarely settled members of the community.

In modern society it is individual Tinkers whom we meet in court. They have fixed abodes, although they move often and travel a great deal. The police thus have a chance to search their houses and find stolen goods, and to investigate the milieu in which they live and the company they keep. People in the district recognize them and are not afraid to turn them over to justice. It is easier to find evidence and testimony against them, which makes it easier to convict them. For the theft of a coffee-mill and a lantern, for example, one Tinker was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment. The sentence was not based on the crime he committed but on the criminal he was. His earlier life could be pinned down in a new, more efficient way, thus forming a basis for the judgement that he needed many years of disciplining to repent his crime.

Throughout Sweden, new cell-based prisons were erected in the mid-nineteenth century. The new penal technique gave rise to the "delinquent;" they are two sides of the same coin. Foucault has put it like this: "criminality is the prison's revenge on justice" (1987:297). Criminology creates an individual synonymous with the delinquent. In the same way, the Tinker is used as an object or a social and cultural construction in the service of science. He is now dangerous not on account of his crime; it is the crime that shows how dangerous he is.

The exercise of power, whether by the state, the executive authorities, the local public sphere, or ordinary people, does not succeed in making the Tinker into an honest citizen. What happens when these different values and norms conflict?

The Tinker does not assume any guilt, does not adapt, does not become "normal." Instead, he develops new attitudes, new cultural strategies based on the opportunities offered by changed circumstances. He confronts the normalizing power with revised counter-strategies. The Tinkers learn the norms, but they do not internalize them. Instead they mock the law by playing with the servants of justice, by turning the trials into spectacles, by ridiculing the ordinary law-abiding citizen for his fear and lack of freedom. In this way the Tinker reinforces his own identity, while the conformist uses him to strengthen his own.

There is less room to maneuver, however, and strong cultural formation is required if the Tinker's identity construction is not to collapse. This is shaped and communicated in close kinship relations and widely ramified networks. This collective provides the strength to act in the individual roles into which Tinkers are forced by the normalizing power. On the other hand, the interplay with the local community, in which the Tinker now more obviously finds himself, means that other people no longer fear him the same way as before. More exactly, people are no longer afraid of the Tinker's revenge, but they are afraid of ending up in his immoral life. In this the normalizing power has been successful. By sharpening their weapons against the Tinkers, they have been able to discipline the people. Normal people are now governed by an inner coercion.

The Problem that Disappeared

After 1954 the Tinkers ceased to be treated as an official problem at the national level. Interest was now focused on Gypsies instead. Yet the Tinkers did not disappear when power was no longer able to use them to discipline others; they lived on, but in different forms.

The large families remain. Many of them have been integrated into society and have no distinct identity, whether as traveling people or Tinkers. The generations that grew up from the 1940s onwards have had excellent opportunities to leave Tinker life. Some have been able to retain an identity as traveling people in new forms acceptable to society, as fairground workers, revivalist preachers, circus artistes, or musicians. Others live with a sense of cultural fragmentation in diffuse dual identities, in the twilight zone between retaining a life as travelers and being integrated in society. They would like to resemble the hard-working, law-abiding conformist, but they are also afraid of leaving the community afforded by the traveling identity. Attempts to do so often meet with mockery and sanctions from other traveling people.

There is thus good potential now to become integrated members of society, but very little potential to live outside society. The only real available alternatives to integration are fragmentation or criminalization.

The Change in the Tinker Identity

The eighteenth century as I have depicted it was thus a mobile and relatively free society for the Tinkers. By contrast, the nineteenth century was a period of permanence and coercion. The modern Tinker was formed in the resolute socialization which sought to incorporate him in the community and to make him internalize a sense of guilt and remorse, as modern society demands.

Perhaps it was out of a desire to warn others of the dire consequences of an immoral life that the authorities were so zealous in their struggle against the Tinkers. They were used as deterrent examples in the discipline that was necessary during the construction of modern society. It was thus possible to strengthen the identity of the normal conformist.

Since society now sought to treat Tinkers as individual cases, the Tinkers responded by developing their resistance strategies from collective to more individual action. They were now acting in a society which had become static, stratified, and coercive in a completely different way from before, with a more subtle exercise of power and more varied strategies for adaptation.¹⁰

Whereas the classic Tinker was rarely or never convicted, his sons and daughters suffered at the hands of modern society.

The prison chaplain at Malmö prison in southern Sweden painted a clear picture of how Tinker life had changed. In 1888 he wrote about the father of a Tinker who had spent most of his life in prison, "his father was fairly well known in Scania in his day." At some time in his youth he had been employed by a regiment, but had then led a roving life and "was provided with a large number of horses and did not appear to have any shortage of money." The chaplain went on to report about how often this man "had often been accused of theft, but was seldom, if ever, convicted, which is said to have been because one or other of his children always admitted responsibility for the crime." During the last years of his life, however, when all his children were in prison, this Tinker was sent to the poorhouse, where he died at a great age.

Power is now exercised in a more diffuse way, at the same time as social education becomes more effective. Now Tinkers were taught how to read and write, they were confirmed, and sometimes they even got married. This was unknown in the eighteenth century. Society now intervened much more in their lives in general. For example, the Tinkers were often confirmed in prison; they no longer escaped punishment for their crimes.

From having been free and mobile outsiders, the Tinkers now settled down and took more part in local social life. They had less room to maneuver. Lacking the opportunities they once had, they found themselves more on the same level as the ordinary people. People were no longer afraid of them, so they did not give them what they asked for; the Tinkers therefore stole instead. They developed new strategies, not infrequently outright deceit and theft, and more and more Tinkers became criminalized. Yet they could also increasingly derive an income from clowning, playing the fiddle, and other entertainment.

The Tinker developed a new behavior on the basis of the changed possibilities available to him. He confronted the normalizing power with an altered counter-strategy. Judicial hearings were turned into farces, and the reforming efforts of the prisons were made to backfire. The Tinker learned the norms, but he did not internalize them. Instead he violated and mocked them. In this way the Tinker built up his own, partly new identity.

Yet there was less freedom of movement, and intense resistance was needed, a vigorous cultural formation, so that the culture built by the Tinkers would not be demolished. This resistance was shaped and communicated in intimate kinship relations and ramified networks. This collective gave the strength to act in the individual roles into which they were forced by the normalizing power.

The Tinkers also used the education they received in prison for their own purposes, to challenge power using its own language. Many of them attained a level of education much higher than that of the majority. Their way of speaking "eloquently, with no dialect," as noted in many accounts in the folklore records, astonished many people. They had to be able to master the language of the authorities to survive. The language of the peasantry they could manage without (cf. Österberg 1991).

Their response to official control and attempts to incorporate them in society was to give the illusion of a professionalism which only they possessed. In court hearings they often made fun of the officials by making confusing and contradictory statements or by making a mockery of the evidence. Being accustomed to appearing in court, they showed great skill in maneuvering plaintiffs, witnesses, judges, and jurors.

Ordinary people isolated the Tinkers by calling them by pejorative names. The Tinkers' effective response to this was to set themselves above the norms for naming children. They chose names of noble or at least bourgeois origin to manifest where they saw their true social standing. Alternatively, they gave their children odd names which nobody else used, to reinforce their identity as deviants. Tinker children often received three, or at least two names, often long, compound names. One girl, for instance, was named Antonia Heredina Vilhelmina. In one of the families we meet, the girls were called Florenzia, Ragnitt, Laurina, Olivia, Nilsina,

Helfina, and Dussina. Another family had girls named Vetsera, Axelina, and Hildusine, while the sons were called Agart, Falmer, and Angantyr. We also find Julius, Frans, and Ferdinand, or Alexander and Amandus, names which were otherwise borne mostly by popes. In modern society the Tinkers use names like John, Ellen, Mary, Tommy, Johnny, and Jerry. The use of English names, which became generally common in Sweden towards the end of the nineteenth century, was considered a sign of poor taste and lack of national feeling.

As for surnames, the chief strategy of the Tinkers appears to have been to have as many available names as possible. They appear under different names at different trials and in other contacts with the authorities. Their confusing tactics misled the police in their inquiries. Sooner or later, everyone in these Tinker families appears to have used the name Karlsson. Yet there was no hereditary tradition when it came to surnames. The Tinker Brolin, for instance, had sons who called themselves Karlsson. There was a tendency, however, for families who had closer contact with ordinary people to use conventional naming practices, whereas the infamous criminal families constantly changed identity. When a Tinker mocked the norms of society, he chose a surname like Hederlig, 'Honest' (Svensson 1992).

Language was another counter-strategy for use against the authorities in particular. Thieves' cant was used to reinforce their identity both internally and externally (cf. Farge 1986, Okely 1983). Their secret jargon gave a greater sense of solidarity while also frightening other people by being alien, incomprehensible, and hence menacing.

When Offenders Became Delinquents

In 1864 Sweden adopted a new penal code. It was based on the idea of guilt, with the focus on the criminal rather than the crime. It sought to improve individuals, to shape them into moral beings. The emphasis was not to be on the execution of the punishment but on the effect of the punishment as a deterrent, acting as a psychological coercion on the citizens. This was the normative side of punishment. The new law was to have an internal as well as an external effect. The main aim was to cause the convict to realize his guilt so that he would cease to commit crime. It was the person of the criminal that was now important.

It was in this way that the soul entered penal law. This gradually gave rise to a whole new science, a new understanding of man. The body, which had previously been the goal of the penal system, was now only an instrument for reaching a person's inner being through a system of compulsion and duty. The pillory disappeared, to be replaced by an array of experts on education and therapy. The penalty was no longer aimed at the body, but sought a more profound influence.

Detailed biographies of the course of the prisoners' lives and their family background were now compiled in Swedish prisons. The Tinkers thus came to be defined as a distinct group. Normative assessments led to them being judged more harshly, since no improvement in their conduct could be observed. In 1888 the Tinker Elias Fredriksson was condemned to penal servitude for life for his fifth theft (which he denied), the stealing of a purse—valued at 0.10 Swedish crowns—out of the waistcoat pocket of a person at Clemenstorget in Lund. It was not the crime but the criminal that was judged.

When shame ruled, it had been the practice to condemn a person who had violated the norms by punishing the crime and making the culprit atone for it by suffering shame, whether in the sinner's pew or the pillory. When the crime was atoned for, the offender was free. In a modern society ruled by guilt, the focus is on the person who committed the crime. The criminal is to be made to regret his deeds. From guilt, duty, and remorse there is no freedom. It was in this way that trespasses became crimes, and offenders became delinquents.

The laws against vagrants were renewed and toughened. At the start of the twentieth century the Swedish committee on vagrancy warned of what they called the growth of criminal colonies.¹¹ In this civilization, Tinkers took on a special position. More attention was devoted to them as a distinct group, and there were discussions of special legislation.

Criminology creates an individual synonymous with the delinquent. In the same way, the Tinker is used as an object or a social and cultural construction in the service of science. He is now not dangerous on account of his crime; it is the crime that shows how dangerous he is.

Conclusion

I would not have discovered either the continuity or the change had I not used such a long historical perspective as to make different historical situations visible, if I had not regarded statements in my archival sources as actions performed by human beings, or if I had not acquainted myself with the structure around them and considered the probability that such actions and people can tell us something about culture and history (cf. Isaac 1982:323ff).

By following the way the Tinkers' cultural identity has been changed, I have also described how ideological power is exercised in the Swedish society. Much has changed for the Tinkers, but there is a remarkable continuity in their outsiderhood, in their way of challenging and reshaping the norms. The Tinker can retain this way of living by virtue of a cultural competence that has been acquired over the centuries (cf. S. Gmelch 1975, G. Gmelch 1985). The basis of this competence is a readiness to move and an ability to master the situation. And the Tinker was able to preserve

this way of life through his skill in adapting his “informal economy” to the changes of society’s economy. The more material side of their cultural identity was based on their successful and flexible ability to support themselves (cf. Kienitz 1989, Okely 1983). The consistent feature of everyday Tinker life is movement and constantly new solutions. The habit of change can be described as the tenacious structure. This ability can be compared to that possessed by post-modern “nomads in the present” (cf. Melucci 1992:69).

I believe that the Tinkers have actively participated in society’s cultural and social construction. Since they so clearly were yardsticks for disciplining, various strategies and techniques were tested on them. They did not just live up to the identity that was ascribed to them. They went beyond it and developed it.

Resistance need not take the form of an organized and well-formed rebellion to be effective. It can be enough to indulge in petty acts of disobedience, insolent repartee in court, and a cunning ability to resist the attempts of the state to normalize them. I believe that the Tinkers were a real threat to the established order, or at least a challenge. Legislation was tried against the Tinkers and was changed to keep up with their ability to show how order could be transgressed.

In the old peasant society, it is true, they played the role of touchstone, but it was not until modern times that they came to be an instrument in the service of discipline. The relation between society and the Tinker became one where the state had the upper hand to a much greater extent than ever before. The way ordinary people related to them was more a matter of marking distance and fearing to end up in the same situation. In modern society the Tinkers’ identity developed from collective to individual. They are now instead segregated as despised individuals from a collective clan.

What remained for the Tinkers was either to adopt the established norms or to continue the tradition of transgressing boundaries, although this must now be done in a fragmentary border zone in which they are on the way to being defined as either in or out, or else in a criminal identity. In modern society the state must have its citizens socially defined. It is not possible to live outside society.

Society’s norm system is changed only by being questioned. Borders can be transgressed from above by people who have such a sure position that they do not risk losing it by testing or disregarding prevailing norms. Yet change can also be accomplished from below by outsiders who challenge and question.

Notes

¹Tinkers are a peripatetic group indigenous to Sweden. Called *Tattare* by outsiders, they refer to themselves as *Resande*, ‘Travelers.’

²There have been some studies in Sweden concerning Tinkers, most of which have the 1930s as their starting point. The most extensive of these is a genealogical study carried out by the sociologist Adam Heymowski to answer the question of whether Tinkers were a social isolate or an ethnic minority. He found that they should be considered a social isolate (Heymowski 1969). In the mid-1940s professor Gunnar Dahlberg examined them from a race-biological and physical anthropological basis. His conclusion was that they descended from a pariah stratum of Swedish society (Dahlberg 1944).

³The way people spoke about Tinkers can be seen in various documents from the different levels where the Tinkers interacted with the judicial system. I have used official records from trials and police interrogations, parish assemblies, poor-relief boards, and other social authorities, notes made by prison officers, government inquiries, committee papers, reports from county governors, and documents emanating directly from the government, parliament, and the ministries. I have compared this with the way people wrote about Tinkers in the press, in literature, and in parish registers. The Tinkers themselves speak through their own statements in court records. The way "ordinary" people talk about Tinkers is clear from witnesses' testimony in court records and in folklore records in the archives. In Sweden there are a great many court records going as far back as to the seventeenth century. These records can be read as testimonies from all the parties involved; that is the Tinkers, the people in the villages, the local authorities, and the state. They were written down relatively immediately, so they can be seen as contemporary documents. In order to interpret them one must get to know their context. Many interrogations with Tinkers have also been preserved in the archives. I call my method—combining court records with biographies compiled from parish records—"fieldwork in the past."

This study is based on materials in the Brösarp parish archives, Andrarum parish register, 1899; Lund Provincial Archives, Lund, District Court proceedings, Albo, 1853; Färs, 1885; Gärds, 1891; Ljunits, 1811; Rönnebergs, 1764; Lund Provincial Archives, Internal passport records; Lund Provincial Archives, Parish Records, Fågeltofta parish meeting minutes, 1844; Gårdstånga birth and baptismal records, 1744; Gladsax marriage records, 1851; Glumslöv parish meeting minutes, 1775; Skivarp death and burial register, 1890; Västra Vram parish catechetical meeting minutes, and list of certificates of changes of address, 1847; Lund Provincial Archives, Records of Kristianstad, Malmö, and Ystad prisons, inmate rolls, prison chaplain's reports, biography books; Malmö City Archives, Parish records, Oxie parish birth register, 1782; Malmö City Archives, Malmö Magistrate's Court, court record for 26 October 1726; Malmö City Archives, Criminal Police Records, Investigation of the *Tattare* of Skåne, 1935, collection of fingerprints and photographs; Music Museum, Stockholm, Collections of the Folk Music

Commission, Abbekås, 1887; National Archives, Stockholm, Records of the Supreme Court, the Royal Chancery, and the Social Department; Nordic Museum, Stockholm, Ethnological Survey (EU), folklore material concerning *Tattare*; Royal Military Record Office, Stockholm, General muster rolls; Södra Mellby parish archives, Vitaby parish register, 1890–1911.

⁴Foucault has been criticized for objectifying the subject and ignoring his potential. Yet he himself responded to this criticism in an afterword to Dreyfus and Rabinow's book about him, "My objective has been to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects. My work has dealt with three modes of objectification which transform human beings into subjects." The three ways are the way of asking questions about the speaking subject, dichotomizing practices, which divide the subject either inside himself or from others, and the way in which people transform themselves into subjects. "Thus it is not power, but the subject, which is the general theme of my research" (Foucault 1982:208f).

⁵In this way it can be said to be the Tinkers' own version, since they in fact could tell their story as they wanted. It usually contains a full life story: how they grew up, their family, and how they earned their living, as well as whether they had been convicted and imprisoned.

⁶In most of the archival material the persons from the families studied can be identified by the designation *Tattare* (Tinker). In Sweden there was no distinction between Tinkers and Gypsies until the beginning of the twentieth century, but the most common epithet is *Tattare*. Records generated by the state, the court and the police identify a person as Tinker more commonly than do registers made by priests in the parishes. Since I follow persons with a very articulated reputation as Tinkers who also identified themselves as Tinkers, I can be convinced of their Tinker identity even if they are not explicitly called *Tattare* in my sources. For a more detailed discussion of problems concerning archival material, see Svensson 1992a.

⁷In Sweden the campaign against Tinkers peaked in the early 1940s with demands for sterilization, vehement attacks in leading articles in the press, censuses of Tinkers, calls for registration, racial studies, and so on. No special legislation was ever enacted directly against Tinkers, however, nor were there any special educational camps as there were, for instance, in Norway.

⁸It is not an easy task since they did not want to be registered, they traveled a lot and they did not interact with the normal institutions of society. But they always baptized their children and often applied for the type of passport required until 1860 for travel within Sweden, so there are different archival materials where it is possible to identify them.

⁹Cf. Kienitz (1989), who has shown how women in Württemberg lived a vagabond existence, where the economy of destitution forced them to beg and steal.

Mobility is an important constituent of what she calls the "Kultur der Armut." This culture only becomes clear against the background of society's conflicting norms. Her point of departure is the trial of a vagabond woman accused of murder with robbery, and she paints a picture of what the everyday life of this woman may have been.

¹⁰The police system was developed and organized with increasing efficiency, and new investigation methods and registers gave new opportunities for surveillance. Fingerprints were a new way to detect criminals; they were first used as a means of controlling subject people, by a British commissioner in India. Carlo Ginzburg (1980b) uses this metaphorically when he describes detection by clues as an "evidential paradigm" which, he argues, exerted its influence on science and identification methods in the late nineteenth century.

¹¹Of course, there were gangs, family bands, even criminal cultures before this. See Arlette Farge's examples from eighteenth-century Paris. Yet then it was crimes and criminality that were the focus, whereas now the interest is in the criminal and the delinquent, the person who breaks the norms.

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Respect and Rank Among the Machvaia Roma

Carol Miller

The Machvaia Roma of California have a propensity for ranking and believe respect is significant to an auspicious status. They contend, on the basis of purity of bloodlines, wealth, an estimable lifestyle, the success of their manner of occupation—their women are famous as fortune tellers—that they are destined by inheritance to be the “people of respect.” This paper concerns how respect is given—the actions and ethos—and to whom, where it presumably comes from—without shame there can be no respect—and the relevance of respect to obedience, ascendancy, and reputation.

According to Goffman (1963:6–7), in the opinion of the larger society the social identity of American Gypsies bears a stigma. Yet Gypsies, he says, remain relatively untouched by their “failure” and protected from despair. Insulated by their alienation, protected by identity beliefs of their own, they take refuge in “a separate system of honor.”¹

That they are so enabled has much to do with a system the Roma² call respect. Respect is a central precept relating to important ideas about power, purity, luck, and rank which seem closer to South Asian lines of thought in the case of the Machvaia Roma than to those of the West. “Respect,” the English word, is popularly used to connote those ceremonial behaviors and matters of etiquette by which “a self that is worthy of deference” (Goffman 1967:84) and “which must be treated with proper ritual care” (p. 91) is presented.

The Roma are a small and unspecialized society. Everyone, according to sex and age, is engaged in similar pursuits and judged by identical standards. Evidence of respect is taken as indicative of other qualities, evaluated as estimable or not. Public demeanor can confirm or deny moral value, lineage reputation, the merit of

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family status. Respect given, respect received, has much to do with rank, with luck and expectation, and what can be hoped for the future.

Historically, the Gypsies have always been the minority, vulnerable and politically powerless, within a larger, often penalizing, host society. The ideology and practice of respect tends to equalize, at least in part, an unequal situation. Giving respect is a constant reminder of differences which are justified as God's design. Machvaia Roma regard the differences as critical and intrinsic, differences of inheritance, destiny, and bloodline. It is said that outsiders, non-Gypsies, "don't know about respect;" on this basis, outsiders are owed no respect whatsoever. Because of lack of shame awareness, as well as ignorance of the rituals of purity and respect, outsiders are unlikely to be invited into Machvaia homes or to the more public celebrations. From the Machvaia point of view, only in the company of those of their own kind are there benefits to be obtained from paying, and deserving, homage.

The following describes what Machvaia men and women do to show respect, to whom respect must be shown and why, and some of the parameters by which, during face-to-face interaction, the degree of respect that must be given is critiqued.

The Machvaia Roma of California are the subject of this study, which is based on formal and informal field research with Machvaia in Seattle, Washington, and in California since 1966.

A closely intermarried group, the California Machvaia comprise a relatively small community in which each adult is "known," as they say, if not directly, then by public reputation. More than 80% either live in Los Angeles or spend a six-month winter there. With little formal education, the Machvaia manage remarkably well, not only financially, but also by adaptively blending into their surroundings and successfully negotiating what Goffman calls face-work, "the actions taken to maintain a positive social value" (1967:5-15) during their contacts with non-Gypsies. The stigma of being categorically labeled as Gypsy (still a stigma, sad to say; those Americans who immigrate from Europe often bring their prejudice with them) is usually avoided by the Machvaia. When asked about "racial" identity, they tend to avow another ancestry, Serbian, Armenian, Argentinean, and so forth. Their country of origin, in fact, is Serbia.

In America, it would seem that all Roma tend to regulate social interaction according to respect conventions. The Machvaia Roma, however, claim to know more about respect, how to give it, how to deserve it, how to behave in a respectful fashion than the other Roma. They say respect is their *baX*, good luck, in the sense of a preordained fate. Respect behaviors are believed to come naturally to them and to be recommended as the preferred actions that will lead to successful results. They call themselves "the people of respect." In this sense, the Machvaia were the ideal

subjects for a study of this kind. It was, for one thing, relatively easy to enlist their enthusiasm for the topic.

How to Give Respect

Respect, as the Machvaia use the term, glosses obedience (*padja*) and trust (*padja ma*) (Gjerdman and Ljungberg 1963:307),³ which is synonymous with the auspicious. When I asked what trust had to do with obedience, and obedience with respect, the answer was, “Who would you respect? Your parents because they gave you life, your grandparents who borned them, your godparents because they are ‘like God.’ These are the main ones. But anyone you trust and would obey is respected.”

Then, in the best Goffmanesque manner of backstage aside (Meyrowitz:68–71), the speaker added, “Of course, who can you trust? No one. Everyone has to cheat, to lie. To survive.” Reflectively studying the ring on his hand, he added, “Sometimes I just believe a little—because I have to.”

Etiquette

All Roma adults are owed respect in some degree. But the elder should be given more by the younger, and women should show men respect in ways more varied and intensive.

Respect, as the people say, is “the right kind of action.” Respect behaviors involve separation, verbal avoidance, avoidance of anything connoting the sexual, discretion regarding approach, seating, physical movements, facial expressions, appropriate attire, gifts of the generous kind, and a demeanor that consistently conveys the “good heart,” which is a heart holding love for all Roma.

Respect relates to authority and ascendancy, and with the way that men move through the doorway first, eat first, are served first, or in conjunction with separate food service to the older women. For Machvaia, it means segregation, women and girls together and the boys with the men. It has to do with avoidance, with the graceful minuet that allows the different sexes to pass and circle each other without mishap, the women ably negotiating their flowing skirts, the men making continual minor adjustments to their chairs so no one presents a back, except as intended insult. Respect behaviors include matters of naming (in addressing spouses or those of a different status, particularly those more prestigious, the given name is avoided) and proscriptions on certain topics of conversation, as well as displays of cross-sex affection. Except with peers, any reference whatsoever to the sexual or excretory functions is forbidden; pains must be taken, particularly when elders are present, to avoid the disrespect of referring to or going to the bathroom.⁴ An appropriately

modest appearance is prescribed. Until recently, skirts were usually pleated from a fifteen-yard sweep of material and several petticoats were required to hide the line of the limbs. Staring is avoided; it implies excessive interest in the other person. Smoking, except with those of like gender and age, is avoided, as well as contradicting or refusing in a direct fashion, i.e., to the face.

Respect has to do with the engineering and timing of public appearances. Attendance at the important Machvaia ritual occasions is advised and, whenever possible, helping with the buying, cooking, and serving. Respect is accompanying a Machvanka to the hospital for surgery and waiting, however long it takes, to provide her family the comfort and support of company. Respect is shown by attending *capella* (chapel for the deceased) for the final farewell and traveling, however far is required, for the one-year *pomana* (dinner of commemoration). "You have to." It is arriving at the saint's-day feast to which you've been invited with the appropriate good will or calling ahead to excuse and explain the reason for your absence.

Gifts of Good Will

Those individuals who are carefully socialized tend to an appealing and gracious deportment. But nothing counts more than "the thought in the heart." Respect should express the most elevated intentions. Each person is held responsible for his or her thoughts and feelings which should be sensitive to and perceptive of the thoughts and feelings of others.

Respect is taken as evidence of good will. Failure to show respect, on the other hand, is conceived as discourteous and unkind. Repeated neglect suggests insult. There is, in fact, a point at which "if you don't give respect, you won't get it. If you don't mind your parents, right or wrong, then people won't think your family is good." But Machvaia adamantly deny that respect practice involves trading or indicates reciprocal exchange. They say respect is given in the spirit of free gift and without any expectation of return whatsoever.

To be liked, admired, and shown respect, it is well advised to be generous. Although a Machvano could think of no parallel term in Romani, he assured me that his people were familiar with the idea of generosity. "Generosity," he said, "is a big part of my people." Gifts and offerings move both giver and receiver into a happier and more fortuitous dimension. Service and hospitality, selfless gifts of money, worship, advice are considered devotional. Although both parties accumulate virtue, the one who gives will accumulate the most.

Last year, over breakfast, Rachel, who has patiently answered my questions for nearly three decades and served me innumerable meals, explained with obvious complacency, "Eating my food puts you in my power. Did you know that?"

The Machvaia believe that gifts to the saints must be generous. Saints, the Machvaia say, are “up” because their return gifts of good health and good fortune are so generous. Early Hindu literature prefigures Machvaia concepts of power and generosity. According to Marriott and Inden (1990:350), “Rank in...ancient South Asian moral order was thought of as being based less upon established possessions than upon generosity. Gods were of higher rank than men not so much because they possessed the attribute of divine power as because they were incomparably generous in bestowing that power on men. Men were of lower rank because they could not return this gift.”

In Romani, *sevapo*, a good deed, (Serbo-Croatian *sevap*) is a gift of respect. The favor of “taking the suit [of clothing]” on behalf of the deceased at a *pomana* has elements of risk and puts the giver “up;” it is said to be a “help” *sevapo*. Giving a favor, a *sevapo*, like baptizing for another family, is a gift of “mercy.” A *sevapo*, like going out of the way to help those in serious trouble, can be a gift of “salvage.” The latter is humiliating to those who require it. The death blow to reputation, it implies poverty, bad luck, stupidity, a lower rank. The Machvaia enjoy offering the favor of salvage, which elevates the giver and affords the merit of good repute. On the other hand, when a Machvaia family requires aid and salvage, to keep respect within their own community they usually resort, as they can, to the help of outsiders.

Hospitality

In keeping with the ethic of “seeing each other in the good way,” when a Machvaia family has visitors, rituals of polite avoidance and attentive presentation are stepped up to a fever pitch. The Machvaia have a saying, “Respect your family by showing respect for others.” A mother-in-law is likely to encourage her daughter-in-law to increased deferential service by saying, “T’aves mai latchi angla Roma,” which the speaker translated as “When you get company in the house, be nice in the house.” (A more literal rendering is “You must be better in front of the Roma.”) Gypsy hospitality follows the standards for peasant India and nomads around the world; it requires that all arriving visitors be celebrated with something to drink—among the Machvaia, this is usually coffee—and something to eat. The presentation is made as attractive as possible, the service impeccable and attentive, the guests urged to eat more, and then some more, and the supply unfailingly generous. The idea is that the guest be surrounded with warmth and good will. Thus treated, guests are likely to say, upon leaving, that the host family is “nice and respect. They gave us good service.” They might well tell their friends that “those people liked us.” Showing respect in this manner is usually taken as tangible evidence of affection.

Ritual hospitality is a daily occurrence. *Patchiv* hospitality, however, is infrequently offered and more noteworthy. *Patchiv* demonstrates the willingness to

perceive a particular person, someone just met and much admired, or someone, perhaps a relative not seen for some time, as *patchivalo* (highly respected).⁵ Gjerdman and Ljungberg, in their Kalderash language dictionary, gloss *patchiv* as respect, reverence, honor, to treat with honor, to esteem. The term usually couples with the verb of action *dav*, 'I give'. *Patchiv* refers to hospitality transformed into a party. The host might give notice as follows: "I am giving Bugari a party, a *patchiv*." Jan Yoors, a Belgian who spent much of his childhood among the Lowara Roma of Europe, extends the connotations of the *patchiv* celebration to include peace offering and good will (Yoors 1959:16). When the Machvaia were on the road and travel (by horse and wagon until 1920; by car and tent until the thirties) was slow and arduous, social encounters were infrequent and consequently of greater significance. (See Yoors for a poignant *patchiv* meeting between two groups of traveling Lowara.)

The *patchiv* is officially announced by the host before eating, "This is a *patchiv* for Bugari, my uncle, and I, Radawano, am giving it." Many elements of the *patchiv* feast resemble the *slava* feast, a feast offered saints. The food, the special ceremonial dishes, the barbecued pigs or lambs, the generous portions, are the same. Everyone who comes must show a particular respect for the guest of honor. Those who can, entertain. As at *slave*, there is always the happiness of singing and dancing. When the young girls dance, they may begin by nodding to the guest and addressing him, "Patchiv tuchi, Bugari," 'I honor you, Bugari,' and end with a bow and cross-arm wave over their heads in the honored guest's direction.

Ceremonials

At the ceremonials where many Machvaia come together, respect steps up to a fever pitch. Everyone is on their best behavior. The death ceremonials and the *slave* for the saints are the most prestigious events. Ceremonials are the ultimate onstage or "front region" setting, as opposed to backstage informality. Referring to Goffman, Meyrowitz writes that in the front region, performers project a relatively idealized image of a role (1990: 69). At Machvaia ceremonials, the unwritten script is called respect and a successful performance requires that nothing hostile or shameful is done or said—or thought—to dishonor the event. Criticizing other Roma is inappropriate. Yawning is properly avoided for the reason that it might suggest forbidden thoughts, like sex and bed.

According to Old Lola, a Machvanka I knew in Seattle, each individual is responsible for the ongoing quality of respect. If she didn't like the hospitality offered or the topic of conversation, she would say, "Me sem respect," 'I am respect'. If the situation didn't improve, she would leave.

It is at these ceremonials that the performers can assess the credit of their own reputations by keeping an appraising eye on their treatment by others. Those who

are shown respect in the generous fashion and by everyone in the room consider themselves oriented in that more desirable direction, "up." "Up" is the direction of the saints and *hraiio* (sky and heaven). "Up," the pure, refined, and perfect, the beautiful, happy, rich, and lucky is auspicious; down, dark, gross, and dirty, poor and mean implies, of course, the inauspicious. "Up" is everyone's aspiration. "Up," the higher plane, is where the Machvaia want their lives to go.

Roles and Status

Elders

Age has an appreciated value that relates to the accumulation of social experience, to those Machvaia the person has known, many now dead, to the Machvaia whom she or he has parented, now married in an expanding circle of relatives. With the arrival of old age, there is an increase in the respect that is given by others; nearly everyone is younger and, in the past, one hundred and fifty direct descendants was not an unusual number. On the other hand, with a decreasing number of elderly peers, the respect that must be given becomes minimal. The elderly are welcome at all the ritual occasions, particularly those most involved with spiritual concerns. Their attendance ensures that these occasions will be meritorious, orderly, and pleasant. Their presence reminds the others of mutual obligations to community and kind and that these, the grandparents, the great-grandparents, will soon become the beloved ancestors. Survival is the Roma mandate. The old people are lucky and successful. They have triumphed because they survived.

Old age is associated with a transformation of natural and social powers, increased authority and wisdom, a presumed lack of sexual appetite, the loss of reproductive potential, the unlikelihood of shame commission or thoughtless violence, and the easing of purity practices of containment. Elders are always to be obeyed and never overtly disputed. In fact, elderly relatives are generally seen as somewhat fearsome and awesome; their power for righting wrongs, cursing and "thinking strong thoughts" is legendary. The Machvaia show their grandparents an optimal respect; they won't undress or have sex in the house of their elders. (Undressing and sexual acts are also forbidden in a room where there are saints' icons or photographs of the ancestral dead.) It is more than an insult to turn your back to the old, to show them disrespect. It may be dangerous.

Gender

Adult males are ostensibly the ones in authority, the public persons. They are assigned the task of defending the family from the damage of fines, jail, racial harassment, and so forth. More important from the community standpoint, males are

the ones responsible for protecting the goodness of family virtue, i.e., responsible for the moral behavior of everyone in their care. These responsibilities are attended by special respect treatment. The gift of respect—respect, by implication, is always a gift—from women to men reflects the man's greater vulnerability in the public arena and the mutual dependence of both sexes on the message of reputation. An elderly woman sitting next to me at a *patchiv* confessed that she was tired and sick and would like to go home. But she couldn't ask her grandson to take her in the presence of the other men without damaging his, and her, respect.

Females are always to live under the protection of parents, in-laws, a brother, or, if they are elderly, a son. A woman's subordination, of course, must be voluntary and it must be good-humored. Old Lola assured me that she offered men respect "because I like to." One time when I asked her why she had allowed a young unmarried man to proceed her through the door, she responded, "to show him I wish him well, that he may be married soon."

Daughters-in-law

The Machvaia mother-in-law, until this past decade, attempted to train her daughter-in-law to a virtually impossible standard of obedience, deportment, tireless hospitality, endless service, and general excellence. One reason for this was the likely loss of respect if the daughter-in-law didn't serve properly or show sufficient marks of respect to her in-laws. The bride was expected to benefit from her training and to earn back whatever she had cost her husband's family within the year. This included the bride price, the money for the wedding, as well as the expense of renting or buying her place of business. When the people remember "real respect," they remember the time everything seemed to depend on the compliance of young women. Even today, no one gives more respect, more respectful avoidance, more service, and gets so little credit in return as the youthful daughter-in-law. Her treatment suggests a status appreciably lower than that of her husband's sisters. The drop in the quality of life for the bride was so severe that, even today, older Machvanki will shed a tear for the bride, "I feel sorry for her."

It is with mixed feelings—she was proud that Machvanki had been so exemplary—that Rachel, my dear and intelligent friend, remembers the time, earlier in this century, when a daughter-in-law was treated like a slave and obliged to offer continual evidence of respectful service.

I remember my mother and aunts as the daughters-in-law. They were very careful in front of my grandfather. Even in the tent. They walked all the way around him. They got up one hour earlier than grandfather and grandmother to get everything ready. They built the fire and warmed the water to wash in. They fixed coffee and breakfast.

My mother always had her hair combed, her scarf on, and clean bare feet. If a piece of hair was out of place there would be trouble. She looked neat and clean all the time. When she served a glass of water, the glass was spotless, the water was cold.

She had to wait for everyone to go to bed and eat afterward. She never said no, no matter what they asked her to do. She tried not to be noticed so she wouldn't be any trouble.⁶

Today, with the deterioration of the extended family lifestyle, households fragment into smaller units. By the end of the first year, the young couple has usually moved to their own dwelling place, away from the immediate observation of the young man's parents, and assumed whatever degree of autonomy they can over their household affairs. The daughter-in-law's status in this more independent situation is less subordinate and more equivalent to that of her husband. The young husband's status, on the other hand, as head of his household tends to undercut and supplant the decision of his father. When elders complain that "there is no more respect," they refer primarily to the loss of real authority over sons and daughters-in-law, and particularly the latter.

In the ritual context, however, and whenever the family has visitors, the younger couple is required, always required, no matter how old and even when they have grandchildren of their own, to show the older couple the traditional marks of respect, including that of obedience.

The More and Less Estimable

Earmarked for special demonstrations of respect would likely be the *patchivalo* Rom, the man who is "up" in the range of respect, the *latchivalo* Rom (the good Rom), the *barvalo* Rom (the rich man), the *ashundo* Rom (the Rom who is popular and renowned for the "right" reasons of a family-oriented lifestyle) and anyone, male or female, who might be considered particularly lucky, talented, generous, and successful.

More respect must be given to everyone of the especially empowered status, those who have given favors, those who are "up," in-laws on the bride's side, for example, particularly during the wedding when the precious gift of another person, the bride, is being conveyed to the groom's family. More respect is given the Machvano who consents to collect the bride price at weddings. For many years the estimable Charlie Yashasko performed this service locally. Respect rewards the merit of virtue. One marital partner per person is the desired goal. Those adults conforming to this ideal are ranked higher on the scale of purity, goodness, respect, and admiration. They are preferred as godparents for the newborn; they are the ones who take the bride through the gate at her wedding.

It is a sacred obligation to show an extra measure of respect to the beloved godparent couple who have selflessly contracted to assume the lifelong responsibility

for their godchildren's health and well-being. In fact, no one is more respected than a godparent. All social interaction must be loving and harmonious. Lies, deceit, fabrications, as well as reference to the unlucky and shameful, either by word or deed, are avoided. The overly familiar and potentially controversial is forbidden. This includes marriage between the godchild's and the godparent's families. The Machvaia say that godparents are "next to The God," and come "before the father and the grandfather." I asked the order of respect treatment should the grandfather and the godfather happen into the same room simultaneously. The godchild said this dilemma would be satisfactorily resolved if "I asked Grandfather to forgive me while I got my godfather a chair."

Respect also rewards those who excel at worldly dominance. For more than twenty years, the Machvaia have not had a Baro leader, a Big Man, to run the neighborhoods, to keep his constituents out of jail, and afford them the benefit of his advice and protection. However, when there was one—within living memory, the notable example is Big George of Los Angeles—he received increments of respect.⁷ Those who lived peacefully and well under his auspices still speak of Big George with reverence.

Those to whom respect is less often and more casually given are those who are younger, those who have behaved insultingly or too familiarly in the past, those of disreputable reputation, those held in some enmity and avoided for reasons of the angry words, or blows, that can erode the unity and kindness of ceremonial occasions. These categories lack authority. They don't command obedience or deserve admiration. They can expect only minimal respect.

The Situation of Outsiders

Respect, as Machvaia Roma conceive it, is exclusively a matter of interest to Roma. The roles assumed in relation to outsiders have no interface with respect or ritual. Not being subject to Romani court or moral rule, negotiations with outsiders can proceed in whatever fashion the situation tolerates.

The difference between Gypsies and outsiders is believed to extend to every distinctive feature. There are, as the Roma see it, different lucks, the outsider luck—which is bad luck for Roma—and the Roma luck. The number thirteen, for example, is considered lucky for Roma, unlucky for outsiders. This follows from the notion that luck is inherited and, much as Inden found in Bengali texts (1976:2), coded for certain elements, characters, predispositions, etc., in keeping with genera (kinds). Owing to the different kinds of disease susceptibilities which the Roma call outsider disease and Roma disease, the avoidance of outsiders was once recommended on the basis of health protection (Sutherland 1992:39-41). These distinctions have

been somewhat compromised during this past half century as the Machvaia have become more sedentary and live in closer contact with outsiders.

Because of their different heritage, outsiders cannot be expected to understand respect; they are neither to be obeyed nor trusted; the actions of outsiders are *dile*, crazy, and cannot be comprehended. The Machvaia find evidence of this on American television. The Machvaia deplore the willingness of the popular media to portray and discuss "everything," topics which include pregnancy, abortion, scenes with nudity, adults in bathing suits, physical contact between couples, and so on. These matters, in public, are *nai latche*, not good. Although, in the privacy of the home, and between husbands and wives, the rules against viewing shameful subjects together are relaxing, whenever someone older, like a mother-in-law, drops in, channels rapidly click from one to the other. When Old Lola visited her daughter and new son-in-law, she complained constantly about America's lack of refinement. She offered her family respect by voicing despair, "What's the matter with the world? They show anything. In front of the children. They don't care who is watching. Men, women...."

In keeping with the premise that Americans, as Machvaia commonly refer to non-Gypsies, neither know nor care about respect, offers of hospitality to them are inappropriate.

Outsiders are also ineligible for *patchiv*, the feast offered a respected person. In more traditional Machvaia households, eating with outsiders at the same table, from the same dishes, at the same time, is potentially damaging. For a Machvano to eat at an outsider's house where the ritual purity of the food is questionable and where, as the guest, he or she would move into the outsider's sphere of influence, would be even more of a problem from the standpoint of status, as well as good luck, etc.⁸

One time when Old Lola dropped by my apartment, she admitted she liked my new cups and saucers. But, although I washed and rinsed them in her presence and prepared the coffee at the table where we sat, she refused to drink. "No, it's not *marime* (defiled). I'm just not used to it."

Whenever I was her guest, however, Lola, who claimed we were "best friends," never failed to serve me something to eat and drink and to join me. Of course, food prepared in the orthodox Gypsy household is of an exceptionally high quality, ritually speaking. It is there that Machvaia find equanimity, the feeling of safety, good health, ease of digestion, the assurance of respect, the "up" direction.

The old timers refused to eat in restaurants. But American restaurants seem to have become pure enough, a kind of neutral territory, as well as a suitable setting for mutually agreeable face-work and status negotiation. Nowadays, respect can be offered by asking someone as guest to a restaurant—those frequently advertised on

television are preferred— ordering generously, more food than anyone is likely to eat, and picking up the check.

Ever sensitive to differences of kind and status, Machvaia tend to rank Americans high to low, rich to poor, clean or not, happy to sad, etc. Largely owing to ideas about the influence and contagion of good and bad luck, they prefer to associate with high-class outsiders. As they can, they try to live in the better neighborhoods where everyone looks lucky, where prospective fortune telling clients are “rich,” where the roads are smooth, the people healthy, clean, peaceful, and courteous, and their children can be entrusted, at least for a time, to the public school system. On occasion, to improve her mood and increase her good luck, Old Lola liked to be driven through the upscale neighborhood where I once lived. “Big trees. Beautiful place. It’s like a church,” she approved. The auspicious is expected to embrace the spiritual.

Postscript Regarding The Outsiders

As noted, outsiders are not owed respect. But a fortunate few have been given respect, nonetheless. Franklin Roosevelt was one; he was “like God.” “We loved him to death.” John Kennedy was also popular; his picture still hangs near the shrine area in a few Bay Area houses. And then there was Mrs. Bridges who, according to Fatima, the Machvanka, “gave her life to Gypsies.”

For many years, Mrs. Bridges ran a mission on Fifth Street in Los Angeles. She told the Gypsy children Bible stories with paper dolls and served them cocoa with canned milk. She was always welcome at the people’s houses and parties. When she got old and couldn’t afford a car anymore, the Machvaia bought her a car. When she died, they paid for her funeral.

Fatima says, “You could tell she was a godly person. She shone. The God put a light in her face.”

More recently, the actor John Travolta, who danced with macho allure in the movie “Saturday Night Fever,” was widely imitated at Machvaia celebrations. The Machvaia are inspired mimics and dedicated dancers; I’ve never known one who couldn’t dance. Imitation shows respect and confirms liking and admiration. Rooms full of young men, from three-year-olds in miniature tuxedos to fathers of thirty, copied the actor’s every movement to the beating strains of “Staying Alive.” When an adolescent boy of thirteen who had admired Travolta died unexpectedly, his parents invited the actor to a post-death ritual. This invitation was unprecedented; death rituals are normally closed to outsiders. Travolta came, I was told, and the young people who attended remember the moment fondly, how Travolta looked, whom he spoke with, how he behaved. After the food was served, however, some of the guests became overly excited and the actor had to leave. Pursued by a mob of screaming teenagers, he escaped through the kitchen.

Asked if the invitation to Travolta was evidence of respect offered an American, the popular response was, "Some gave respect and some didn't." The invitation, of course, didn't carry the same weight it would have had the deceased been married, an adult, and entitled to adult respect.

The Origin of Shame/Respect

Marriage provides the important ritual transition to adulthood. Marriage makes the boy a man (Rom, husband, and Machvano) and the girl a woman (Romni, wife, and Machvanka). The marriage ceremony, publicly acknowledged and coupled with the combining powers of the initial sexual contact, opens up new powers, including that of shame/respect awareness.⁹

Marriage brings to relevance the rituals of purity containment. The awakening of shame/respect is associated with an explosive increase in other admirable adult traits as well, such as thinking good thoughts, having a kind heart, being truthful, trustworthy. The political powers of the two sexes, the men to participate in the Roma court, the women to claim defilement and to institute justice, also become relevant. Ritual obligations regarding hospitality, fasting, holidays, celebrations, and commemorations are assumed. The newlywed couple is afforded the opportunity to negotiate as adults in the public arena, to build their reputations and assess that of others, to prove themselves *latche*, good, or not, and to give and be offered respect.

Becoming adult is becoming responsible. Respectable mature people "understand" themselves and, unlike those called *dile*, crazy people, seem reasonable and "understandable" to the others. Respect is locked to the comprehension of shame. Family members are cautioned to be respectful with the reminder, "Nai tuchi ladjav?" 'Don't you have any shame?' Children betraying an early awareness of respect/shame, possibly a bashful demeanor at adolescence, are considered precocious and intelligent.

The primary ambition of every married couple is to raise children in strict accord with Machvaia standards—"you have to make them afraid"—and to get each child married to another who is considered suitable and who is of the same, or better, status. The commission of a shame implies disobedience, the loss of confidence and trust, love and respect, and reveals the criminal inability of the parents to perform their adult roles effectively and properly socialize the young. A shame implicates the entire extended family and, in some cases, the entire lineage. Reputations suffer, the guilty are devalued. In the case of "big" shames, the perpetrators are ostracized, considered defiled and unfit for the association of other Roma. They are "out," as they say, until the shame is rectified or settled, which may involve a fine, a period of exclusion from any contact with Roma, or enough time for the public to more or

less forget. One Machvaia family was “out” for several generations. Respectable families wouldn’t give them brides and the disgraced family was required to “steal” women, as they said. (Stealing involves running away with another man’s wife or daughter without making prior arrangements with the husband or father.)

To Machvaia, the marriage of what they call the same kind, preferably Machvaia of commensurate status, is believed to be the effective and godly combination. Marriage is the natural and essential arrangement. Those who never marry are regarded as curiosities; bachelors possess very limited social and political powers.¹⁰ As a young divorced Machvano pointed out to me (he was about to be married for the second time and anxious to reestablish his place in the community), respect treatment is like “the Good Housekeeping Gold Seal of Approval.”

Ranking By “Kind”

There are many kinds of Roma groups, named lineage families and groups of varying reputations. They are reported as ranging from excellent in quality and “lucky” to disreputable and low class. The report will depend upon who is speaking. “Bigger” (more important) lineage families expect, and are likely to be given, more respect. The Machvaia, for example, expect more from other Roma and feel obliged to give less. They usually refer to other Roma as the Kalderasha, lumping the many kinds together in an expedient fashion.

It was a Kalderash Rom, however, claiming to be from an especially reputable lineage family who told me there was only one class of Machvaia. “Machvaia,” he said, “are all high-class.”

When Roma meet, the primary question is, “Who are you?” What follows is likely to concern the possibility of a relationship by ritual or blood, and whether he or she is affiliated with the same lineage, the same name-group, or not. This information is critical to calculating the degree of respect that must be offered. Encounters between the Machvaia and the Kalderasha may be a bit awkward. We were sitting in the waiting room at a medical clinic, Nena, her mother, and I, when two local Kalderash Bimburia women arrived. After the initial exchange of credentials, the Bimburia immediately dropped their eyes and voices, assuming a respectful demeanor. One complained about what the other one was wearing; “You don’t dress up. You embarrass me.”

Destiny or *baX*, luck, is believed to be coded by bloodlines into certain elements which are carried through *vitsi*, a multidimensional term that translates as bloodlines, named lineage groups, nationalities, families, kinds. Old Lola, however, preferred the translation “generation to generation.”¹¹ Although all Roma are equal by law, by Romani *kris*, and Lola asserted with positive force, “the same, no

difference,” the Machvaia perceive other *vitsi* as lower in status. Because bad luck is deemed contagious, they say they avoid the latter to protect their auspicious powers.¹²

It is the Machvaia tendency to continually appraise and judge. They rank the various *vitsi*, as well as other Machvaia families, from “big” to “little,” from more prestigious to somewhat suspect. As in Hindu India, rank is conceptualized in terms of the purity and singularity of kind, which is expected to pair with other estimable and lucky qualities, e.g., being rich, healthy, handsome, and otherwise well favored.¹³ The Machvaia consider themselves purer than other, more mixed, Roma on the basis of consistent bloodlines.¹⁴ After six or seven generations of preferential intermarriage in this country, Machvaia preferring Machvaia, they are nearly all, in some way, related by blood; “we are all cousins.” Also, even after many years and many children, Machvaia marriage to an outsider is never formally acknowledged.¹⁵ Insofar as I know, this is not the case with the other Roma kinds.

Women are the most esteemed of gifts. When the marriage between a California Machvaia family and the family of what they call “the Kalderasha” is arranged, the likelihood is that the Machvaia will “take” a bride rather than “give” one. The situation in New York, according to Gropper, is apparently similar. She writes that the Machvaia seldom give to the Kalderasha and “are proud that the majority of their girls marry within their own bands” (Gropper 1975:141). In the past, only Machvaia girls who couldn’t tell fortunes, those with physical defects, or girls who had eloped with an outsider and returned, were given to the Kalderasha. The practice of “throwing a girl away,” which served as warning and punishment has been discontinued because girls now have more to say about who they marry. Another reason is that, in the case of no-fault divorce, retrieving children from a Kalderash *vitsa* has proved difficult.

The Machvaia regard themselves as prestigious by occupation as well as heredity. Their women are famous for telling fortunes. The Machvanki breadwinning capacity has made their people rich, at least by reputation. As a consequence, the Machvano expects he must be the envy of all other men, including Gypsies and outsiders. Enjoyment ranks high on the scale of life’s worthwhile possibilities and the life of the Machvano is supposedly one of enjoyment. He visits other households where he is fed, celebrated, entertained. He discusses Machvaia affairs, a prestigious topic, collecting the merit of admiration and liking. When his wife’s business is profitable, he has the leisure to demonstrate his concern for others and be available to give advice, a gift of great refinement that will link him with respect. He is, the women say, “a playboy,” “a king.”

In addition, the Machvaia methods of earning income are regarded as particularly estimable. They advertise in newspapers, make appointments, and their clients come to the women’s place of business, either the home or *ofisa*, ‘office’.

Their readings vary according to the cultural beliefs and needs of the client. A woman's money in the bank is an established and dependable clientele.

In contrast, Okely (1975:58–9) describes some Kalderash women as luring customers in for a reading by means of feigned eroticism. Such behavior is anathema to a successful Machvanka, whose clients, in fact, are usually women. I was there, just a few feet away, when an angry Machvanka vainly attempted to defile a Kalderash Rom for suggesting that she resorted to such ploys.¹⁶

Machvaia rank the various Roma occupations in terms of effort, risk, and gain.¹⁷ Fortune telling is considered a mode of employment affording much gain for little effort, particularly on the man's part, or risk, and ranks high. Only property and investment management, a recent innovation and one affording the promise of a regular income, ranks higher. Carnival work, body and fender work, buying and selling used cars rank lower. A small number of Roma are reputed to pick pockets, a pursuit that falls on the lower side of the scale and involves little gain for much risk. Even skillful and prosperous pick-pockets are described as "poor" by Machvaia. According to popular Machvaia belief, poor Gypsies suffer bad luck and misfortunes like poor health, unhappiness, failed morals, etc. They can't be trusted. They are considered unsuitable for more than the required ritual association or the minimal respect.

The Machvaia don't like to discuss the depressing subject of the poorer and less lucky Machvaia.

Rank, Respect, and Aspiration

In India, offspring are ranked (Marriott 1976:114) so that genera (read kinds) originating from more consistent or harmonious (sexually and occupationally) acts of mixture stand higher (see also Marriott and Inden 1973, 1990). In their section on social differentiation, Marriott and Inden (1990:348) describe Hindu and in general Indian caste systems as moral systems that differentiate and rank whole populations of a society into corporate units (castes) defined by descent, marriage, and occupation.

American society is not, by definition, a caste system and the Machvaia are not a caste. (Indeed, by declaring themselves anything except Gypsies, Machvaia are invisible in America.) But Machvaia rank their fellows along the same parameters as those mentioned, occupation, descent, and marriage. They observe the greatest social distance, grading into a caste-like separation, between themselves and outsiders. Their refusal to work under outside authority or to take food in the ceremonial context with non-Gypsies suggests an attempt to avoid the inferior position and, as possible, to claim superiority. The California Machvaia place particular emphasis on endogamy, marriage to their own kind. They see this as the

critical factor to a favorable birth and destiny. A social distance of lesser degree is acknowledged between the various Roma kinds which the Machvaia rank, in the manner of sub-castes, according to descent, marriage, and occupation. Marriage to anyone who is Roma is, by law, technically defensible. But, in the Machvaia view, the same, or a better, ranking is always to be recommended.

Seeking to confirm the auspicious quality of their lives and to base behavior on the better, not the worse, the Machvaia are preoccupied with ascendancy and rank. They believe their high-class kind has inherited in-born tendencies for an excellence which includes that of respect. It is interesting to note that after a century in the North American context and a thousand years after their Indian exodus, the American Roma continue to entertain a system of values, rituals, and beliefs more familiar in India than they are in the West. Machvaia concepts regarding the significance of respect to the upwards direction, the improving factors of purity and homogeneity, the power of the estimable, good, the rich, the generous as the means to a superior status (as well as confirming evidence of entitlement) echo, in degree, the South Asian model.

Notes

¹Other groups Goffman mentions as holding to a separate system of honor are Mennonites, scoundrels, and very Orthodox Jews.

²*Roma* is the plural form in the Romani dialect of the Machvaia; the Kalderash dialect uses *Rom* for both singular and plural.

³Gjerdman and Ljungberg have *patiáv*, "[I] obey; respect, esteem"; *patiá ma*, '[I] believe, trust'.

⁴There are ways to circumvent this taboo. A woman might say to her child, "You always have to go to the bathroom," pick up the child and head for the bathroom. Or she might invite another woman on the pretext that they need to wash their hands or comb their hair.

⁵Of the several *patchiva* celebrated in the Bay Area this past decade, two were for grown children who hadn't been seen for forty years. Another was for Singing Sam, the head of a famous musical New York family. The latter was well attended and, as expected, the honored guest entertained.

⁶The current status of the village India daughter-in-law seems comparable to that of the Machvaia daughter-in-law earlier in this century. Bumiller (1990:81), in regard to an upwardly mobile Indian family, notes that Asha Devi was a virtual servant in her in-law's house. She was "up at six, in bed at midnight, and ate only after everyone else in the family had finished." Like a prisoner, she was prevented from going to the nearby village; had she done so, her mother-in-law said the family would "not get respect."

Regarding recent changes in the domestic situation of the Machvaia daughter-in-law, see Miller (1988).

⁷Big George was considered just, generous, rich, and coercively powerful, but not entirely virtuous.

⁸Anne Sutherland (1992:20) also finds consistent connection between good health, auspiciousness, purity, and the moral order in Roma belief.

⁹In keeping with South Asian traditions (Marriott and Inden 1977), the nature of the Machvaia individual changes as her or his role changes. Mind and body, roles and self-concepts change as one. My claims for an Indian origin for these Machvaia beliefs may be met with some skepticism. Okely presents a spirited argument that these connections, linguistic and otherwise, have been overdone (1983:1-27).

¹⁰The Roma attitude towards celibacy, according to Gropper (1975:112), is that it runs "contrary to rules of the universe."

¹¹Similarly, Ronald Inden (1976:10), studying ancient Bengali texts, found that bloodlines transmit the natural substance defining divinely endowed rank and a divinely generated moral code of conduct.

¹²In Los Angeles, ceremonial center for the Machvaia, ritual events tend to be lavish, formal, and well attended. On both the men's and the women's sides, I have noticed that Machvaia usually seat themselves according to goodness of repute and the rank of lineage and family. During these events, Machvaia and Kalderasha don't converse or mingle. Perhaps, as Goffman puts it, the high status person is avoided out of deference and the person with a lower status out of a self-protective concern (1967:70).

It is well to remember, however, that this article represents the Machvaia point of view. My fragmentary contact with other *vitsi* is limited to the West Coast. I have noticed the tendency, however, for each *vitsa*, whether Ginershti, Rishtershti, Marks, Costello, or Kalderasha unknown to me, to declare themselves "the best" and complain Machvaia are "snobs," "showoffs," "no fun," "American," and "too high class." I leave the difference between "the best" and "high class" open to the conjecture of the reader.

¹³Inden (1976:10) found that "the orders of nature, morality, and divinity are conceived of as a unity in ancient Bengali texts."

¹⁴When queried about my "kind," I once admitted to a number of antecedents, French, Welsh, etc., six in all. The women at the table were aghast. Several stood up to find a more favorable situation.

¹⁵In several cases, however, the adoption of American babies has been countenanced and it may be supposed, considering the number of blue eyes and fair skin among the Machvaia, that outsider genes were somehow introduced into their gene pool at a forgotten time in history.

¹⁶Women who are wronged are empowered to pollute men, or rather a woman can claim to have polluted a man and consequently bring the culprit into the purview of the Gypsy legal system (Miller 1975: 50-54). Goffman might call this kind of disrespect a profanation (1967:86)

¹⁷Hübschmannová (1984) links the status of East Slovakian Roma to the occupations of the lineage group, which she calls *jati*.

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Ritual Purity: An Aspect of the Gypsy Pilgrimage to Stes-Maries-de-la-Mer

Janne-Elisabeth McOwan

Various aspects of the Gypsy code of ritual purity, observable during the annual Gypsy pilgrimage to Stes-Maries-de-la-Mer, are discussed. Ritual purity is seen as an indication of Sara-li-kâli's status as a Gypsy. The information concerning both the festival and the specific observation of ritual purity during it was gathered mainly during visits to Stes-Maries-de-la-Mer in connection with Sara-li-kâli's day in 1991 and 1992.

In this article I intend to discuss two principal themes, the importance to Gypsies of the Gypsy pilgrimage in honor of Sara-li-kâli; and the importance of the code of *mahrimé* as it is observed during the pilgrimage, and the implications of the observance of this code in the context of Catholicism. The discussion is largely based upon observations made by the author in conjunction with a colleague, Morten Skovsgaard, during the pilgrimage at Stes-Maries-de-la-Mer in the south of France on May 24, 1991 and 1992.

The Pilgrimage to Stes-Maries-de-la-Mer

There are actually two pilgrimages held in May at Stes-Maries-de-la-Mer. The pilgrimage held in connection with the feast of Ste Marie Jacobé, May 25th, is observed principally by the inhabitants of the village and the surrounding countryside; Ste Marie Jacobé is the patron saint of the village. The other, held on May 24th, is in honor of the Gypsy saint Sara-li-kâli. Sara-li-kâli is venerated principally by Gypsies, mainly those who either live in fixed abodes in the district or who travel in France and the north of Spain, although it seems that the pilgrimage, and indeed

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the saint herself, is becoming increasingly popular among Gypsies who travel in other areas of Europe.

Throughout this article the French forms are used. Marie Jacobé is St. Mary, the mother of St. James the Less. Marie Salomé is St. Salome, one of the women mentioned in Mark 16:1. In Provence she is known as Marie Salomé, probably in order to avoid confusion with Herodias' daughter, Salome. I use the form Sara-li-kâli, which I have heard used by both Spanish and Romani speakers in Denmark, and among Gypsies of varying linguistic backgrounds during the pilgrimage, in preference to the French form Ste Sara.

The importance of this pilgrimage to the Gypsies rests to a great degree on the fact that they regard Sara-li-kâli as their patron saint. Over and above this, they consider it beyond doubt that Sara-li-kâli is herself a Gypsy, and treat her as such.

It may be appropriate at this point to introduce Sara-li-kâli, as she is a little known saint. The earliest documentation, a 1357 poem by Jean de Venette, mentions her as the servant of St. Martha and St. Mary Magdalene. A later source states that she was the maidservant of Saints Marie Jacobé and Salomé and adds the spicy detail that Sara was originally the wife of Pontius Pilate, but left him after the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ, events which apparently convinced Sara, alias uxor Pilatii, of the divinity of Christ (Phillipon 1521).

A third account is given by Franz de Ville who recounts the oral tradition of Belgian Gypsies, according to which Sara was a Gypsy woman living with her tribe in the vicinity of the present day village of Stes-Maries-de-la-Mer at the time of the saints' arrival. Sara welcomed them and went begging to support them, the saints being destitute upon their arrival. She and her kinsfolk were the first people in France to request baptism upon hearing the Gospel preached by the saints (Clébert 1963: 179).

History of the Pilgrimage

This summary is based on various French sources. There are, unfortunately, very few works in English which mention this pilgrimage at all. For a survey of the subject in English, readers should refer to Clébert (1963).

The village of Stes-Maries-de-la-Mer in the South of France celebrates the feast of one of its patron saints, namely Saint Marie Jacobé, on the 25th of May. This festival resembles a great number of other saints' days and the importance attached to it in the village of Stes-Maries-de-la-Mer is easily explained by the fact that the village church, Notre-Dame-de-la-Mer, contains relics of Saints Marie Jacobé and Salomé.

According to the legends of Provence, both arrived in the district along with other saints who, like the two Marys, had been disciples of Christ some time after the destruction of the Second Temple in A.D. 70.

Pilgrimages are known to have been made to the church of Notre-Dame-de-la-Mer throughout the Middle Ages. The church was accorded the status of an official place of pilgrimage by a papal bull of 2 October 1448 (Delage 1956:10).

Today, however, the pilgrimage in connection with the festival of Saint Marie Jacobé is to a large extent overshadowed by the pilgrimage to Sara-li-kâli on the 24th of May. It is this pilgrimage that is commonly known as the Gypsy pilgrimage as, whoever Sara-li-kâli may or may not be, and there is considerable doubt concerning her identity, she is indisputably the patron saint of those Gypsies who make the pilgrimage to Stes-Maries-de-la-Mer for her festival.

It is by no means easy to establish when the original connection between the Sara of the Provençal legends and the Gypsies occurred.

The earliest reference to the Sara of the Provençal legends, that is, the saints' maidservant, who, to confuse matters further, is not always called Sara, was made as early as 1448. In that year a grave said to contain the bones of the saints' servant Sara was discovered in the crypt. The relics from this grave may have been placed in a reliquary in 1448, but this is a matter of conjecture, as the source documents pertaining to the occasion make no specific mention of what was done with these relics, but only of the relics of Saints Marie Jacobé and Salomé (Delage 1956:12).

We find the earliest references to Gypsies in this part of France in 1475 and it is said that at this, their earliest appearance in the district, the Gypsies claimed Sara as their patron saint (Delage 1956:12). To my mind there does not seem to be any conclusive proof of this claim.

Until 1935 the veneration of Sara-li-kâli, as practiced by the Gypsies, was carried out in the crypt of the church, and according to various accounts non-Gypsies, including the parish priest, were refused admittance to the crypt both during the vigil for Sara-li-kâli and on her saint's day (Colinon 1975:60).

Various church records from the 17th and 18th centuries mention Mass being celebrated at Sara's altar in the crypt. Her relics are known to have been hidden during the French revolution by women from the village, and the parish records from the 19th century mention celebration of Mass in the crypt and speak of the increasing number of Gypsies present during the pilgrimage in May. Obviously Sara was regarded as a saint by the local people during the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries, but we are unable to ascertain whether Gypsies took part in the pilgrimage prior to the 19th century (Colinon 1975:65-66) and consequently cannot know whether Sara-li-kâli was regarded as a saint by the Gypsies before the 19th century.

In 1935 the archbishop of Aix-en-Provence gave permission for the statue of Sara-li-kâli to be carried in procession from the crypt through the village to the sea (Colinon 1975:63).

In 1953 an attempt was made to discontinue this annual procession. The resulting dispute, which incidentally, resulted in the participation for the first time of various priests from the area, was ended by decision of Monsignore de Provenchère. "The cult of Saint Sara is an immemorial cult, which is why I am maintaining it in its traditional form. As with many other saints, it is not possible to give precise historical details regarding the person of St. Sara. But it is up to historians, rather than to the bishop to delve into this problem" (Colinon 1975:63).

Since 1953 Sara-li-kâli's saint's day has had its present form. Mass is celebrated at 10:00 AM on May 24th and constitutes the formal beginning of the pilgrimages. At 3:00 PM the reliquary containing the relics of Saints Marie Jacobé and Salomé is lowered from the small chapel high up in the apse of the church where it is usually kept. This ceremony is followed immediately by the procession in which the statue of Sara-li-kâli is carried through the village and out into the sea, where prayers are said before the procession returns to the church. In the church a short service is held, after which the statue of the saint is returned to the crypt, where pilgrims make their devotions for the rest of the afternoon.

I have had the opportunity of attending this festival twice, in 1991 and 1992, and on both occasions was struck by some elements that apparently have been little noted, one might almost say overlooked, by others who have written accounts of the festival for Sara-li-kâli.

Superficially this festival is similar to other festivals for saints who are the patrons of fishing villages or other places where the inhabitants' livelihoods depend on the sea. However, the majority of pilgrims who attend the festival of Sara-li-kâli are not and never have been dependent upon the sea. Apparently the reason that the saint's statue is carried out into the water in this instance is to be found in the fact that Sara-li-kâli either arrived by ship or met the other saints while they were attempting to disembark from their ship. (The interpretation here depends on which version of the legend one prefers.)

A much more significant difference between this and other saints' days is the fact that the Gypsies at the festival were scrupulous in the observance of rules concerning *mahrimé*, the Gypsy code of ritual purity, not only with regard to the correct behavior between adults of opposite sexes, but also with regard to the manner in which Sara-li-kâli was venerated.

These features of Sara-li-kâli's saint's day attracted my attention for various reasons. It is of course interesting to an historian of religion to realize that the code of ritual purity that exists among Gypsies, and which has been extensively described in a secular context (Miller 1975; Yoors 1980),¹ can also be found in a religious context.

Mahrimé

Mahrimé is the term most often employed to denote the Gypsy code of purity. Different spellings are found, such as *marimé*, and many authors prefer to talk about pollution codes, rather than codes of purity. Angus Fraser derives the term from the Greek and gives the alternative forms *moxado*, used in England and Wales, and *magerdó*, found in Poland. He points out that the terms *prastlo*, or *palecido* are used by the Sinti. Fraser succinctly expresses the essence of the code as follows:

The terminology varies; the code itself, despite differences in its particulars and its observance, shows a considerable degree of consistency. Wherever it is strictly adhered to, the taboo system informs all interaction between male and female and Gypsy and *gadžo*. And for a Gypsy to be declared polluted is the greatest shame a man can suffer, and along with him his household. It is social death, for the condition can be passed on: anything he wears or touches or uses is polluted for others. For a people for whom communal life is of major importance, and where marriages, baptisms, parties, feasts and funerals are frequent social occasions, such a sentence is a much feared, and very effective punishment. Among the Rom the only way *marimé* status can be revoked is by convening a *kris* [Fraser 1992:245–246].

It is this social function of mahrimé which is most commonly emphasized in Gypsy studies. Carol Miller states:

The ideology of defilement, or *marime* as defilement is called in Romanes, is pervasive to Rom categories of belief and thought, and extends to all areas of Rom life in some way, underwriting a hygienic attitude to the world, themselves and others. Pollution ideas work on the life of Rom society, especially in the sense of symbolizing certain dangers and expressing a general view of the social order. Lines are drawn between the Gypsy and the non-Gypsy, the clean and the unclean, health and disease, the good and the bad which are made obvious and visible through the offices of ritual avoidance [Miller 1975:41].

Codes of ritual purity are features of many religions, and thus features of the ways of life of a great number of people in the world. Before going any further it is perhaps necessary to consider the term “ritual purity.” What is ritual purity, and why is it important?

The term “ritual purity” has been variously described at different times both by anthropologists and by historians of religion. It should perhaps be borne in mind that an explanation of the term is only necessary to people from a European Christian cultural background because Christianity *does not* consider the matter important. Anyone who happens to have been brought up as a Hindu, Jew, Muslim,

or Gypsy, to name only a few of the traditions where ritual purity is a matter of moment, will be familiar with the concept, whether he or she observes the minutiae of the code or not.

At first glance any code of ritual purity may seem to be principally a matter of hygiene, concerned as it is with such subjects as the correct methods of removing or avoiding such impurities as may very well be termed dirt or filth in the ordinary sense of these words, i.e., rubbish, human and animal excrement, blood, mucus, carcasses, as well as dealing with the precautions to be observed with regard to such features of human existence as birth, sexual intercourse, death, and the disposal of dead bodies, afterbirth, etc.

However as Mary Douglas has pointed out, codes of ritual purity are not merely rules for public health (Douglas 1989 [1966]:29), but basically a matter of separating the holy, or pure, from the secular, or impure. Mary Douglas defines rituals of purity and impurity as "positive contributions to atonement," (Douglas 1989 [1966]:2) thereby placing them irrevocably in the religious sphere.

Codes of ritual purity have moreover, as Mary Douglas states, a social function:

Pollution ideas work in the life of society at two levels, one largely instrumental, one expressive. At the first level, the more obvious one, we find people trying to influence one another's behavior. Beliefs reinforce social pressures.... But as we examine pollution beliefs we find that the kind of contacts which are thought dangerous also carry a symbolic load. This is a more interesting level at which pollution ideas relate to social life. I believe that some pollutions are used as analogies for expressing a general view of the social order [Douglas 1989 (1966):13-14].

How the *Mahrimé* System Works

As we have seen, Angus Fraser dwells mainly upon the socializing aspects of *mahrimé*, while admitting that Gypsy beliefs and concepts are likewise influenced by *mahrimé*. A great many examples of the workings of the code of *mahrimé*, as found in literature about Gypsies, deal exclusively with the social aspects of the code.

This is probably due to the fact that a good many of the rules regulate interaction between adult Gypsy men and Gypsy women. Much of what has been written on the subject leaves the reader with the impression that the main source of impurity, and certainly the most dangerous source, is the female sex. At this juncture most modern readers will feel tempted to point out that the majority of writers on Gypsies in the latter decades of the nineteenth century and the first half of the present century were men, who in the interests of public decency had usually no opportunity of discussing *mahrimé* with Gypsy women.

The usual interpretation of ritual impurity among Gypsies as based upon the conception of the ritual impurity of women seems to be rather too restricted. There are undoubtedly many features of ritual impurity which are connected to childbirth, menstruation, etc., and thereby to adult members of the female sex, but other forms of ritual impurity are connected to animals, to the correct behavior to be observed between members of the same sex who do not belong to the same age group, and to bodily functions and matters of hygiene in general.

Carol Miller uses the Gypsy division of the human body into pure areas versus impure areas as a basis for describing the concept of *mahrimé*.

Briefly stated, the head, mouth, arms, and upper body are regarded as pure; the lower body, legs, feet, and the genital organs, as impure. Precautions are generally taken to avoid contact between the pure and impure areas. To give an example: personal hygiene requires the use of one set of basins, towels, soaps, cloths, sponges, and the like, for washing the pure area of the body, and the use of another set for the impure area. In addition to this, it would be unthinkable for men and women to use the same utensils.

Laundry requires similar precautions, as garments worn on the pure area of the body may never be washed with garments worn on the impure area. Men's and women's clothing cannot be washed in the same tub, or the same water.

Food may not be prepared in vessels used for washing or for laundry, nor is it possible to utilize foodstuffs or cooking utensils that have fallen on the ground [Miller 1975:41].

Miller states that the ratio of purity and impurity alters during the life cycle, from the complete impurity of the new-born infant to the relative purity of the aged. Children are often not required to observe all the particulars of the code, which tends first to be fully activated upon marriage.

The way the system works may be seen in the writings of Jan Yoors, who has many examples of the precautions in daily use among the Gypsies he traveled with.

The connection between *mahrimé* and religion may seem tenuous, few field workers having any information on the subject. Anders Enevig, however, was told emphatically by Gypsy women of his acquaintance that *mahrimé* is a religious matter (Enevig 1969: 68).

The Pilgrimage in 1991 and 1992

Before our original journey to Stes-Maries-de-la-Mer, we had read all the relevant material that was available in Denmark, and had made a list of points to be elucidated concerning the actual proceedings, as these have been very diversely described. Our actual fieldwork was a combination of on the spot interviews, during

which we made no secret of the fact that we were engaged in academic research, participation in the proceedings, during which we deliberately sought to remain as anonymous as possible, and casual conversations with other participants, where we did not necessarily mention our academic background. After the pilgrimage, we were able to supplement our own impressions and observations with those of Danish journalists who had also been in Stes-Maries-de-la-Mer, and through correspondence with the parish priest in Stes-Maries-de-la-Mer.

The schedule of events is as follows:

1. Sara-li-kâli is carried in procession from the church to the sea, hymns and prayers are sung and said during the procession.
2. Sara-li-kâli is carried out into the sea, where prayers are said.
3. The procession re-forms and returns to the church.
4. A short service is held in the church.
5. Sara-li-kâli is returned to the crypt.
6. Private devotions are made in the crypt to Sara-li-kâli and in the church to the two other saints throughout the afternoon.

In 1991 the weather was warm and sunny on the 24th of May, although there was a fairly strong breeze. It was thus possible to view the procession in its entirety.

Sara-li-kâli's procession was led by a group of pilgrims who make the pilgrimage regularly. They carried a large cross made of wooden spars and decorated with flowers, brightly colored ribbons and a banner. This beautifully embroidered banner depicted an open Bible protecting a caravan, and carried the wording, *Pèlerinage des gens du voyage*, 'The travelers' pilgrimage.' (The expression *gens du voyage*, previously restricted to non-Gypsy peripatetic groups, seems increasingly to be used in the South of France as a synonym for "Gypsies.")

A great many ranks of pilgrims followed the cross. Some of these pilgrims carried banners depicting the saints of the village.

The pilgrims were in turn followed by acolytes from the church carrying candles and the processional cross from the church. Then came the parish priest and the visiting clergy. The clergy were followed by some thirty or forty ranks of pilgrims.

Then the float with the statue of Sara-li-kâli came into view. It was carried by men, and followed by women and girls.

The procession was escorted by *les gardiens*, riders on the white horses which are bred in the district.

On the way to the sea hymns were sung and prayers said, seemingly spontaneously. Someone would start to sing and those nearby would join in, or alternately someone would call loudly, "Vive les Saints Maries," 'Long live the Saints Mary', an invocation that was answered by "Vive Sainte Sara," 'Long live Saint Sara'. Then the cry "Vive Sainte Sara" would be taken up and answered by

“qui protècte les gens du voyage,” ‘who protects the travelers,’ or, more simply, by “protècte nos,” ‘protect us’.

On the day of the festival Sara-li-kâli’s statue is attired in a great many mantles. There were actually twenty mantles in 1991, as I verified after the procession. During the procession the upper layers of the saint’s clothing frequently fluttered in the breeze. Whenever Sara-li-kâli’s clothing was disarranged in this way it was immediately smoothed down again and, if necessary, held by one of the women walking behind the float or by one of the small girls riding on the shoulders of the men near the float. At no time did any of the men touch the clothing of the saint.

The village streets are narrow and were exceeding full of pilgrims and tourists watching the procession. Near the sea, where the streets are wider, the congestion was increased by the fact that cars had been parked at random. Nevertheless the Gypsies in the procession took great pains to avoid any contact between the sexes.

When the procession reached the beach the horsemen cantered across the sand out into the sea, where they formed a line, fairly far out in the water.

Most of the pilgrims and spectators remained in the procession, but some crossed the beach and waded out into the sea. Here we waited (I was one of those who went out into the water), until at the end of approximately half an hour the cross from the head of the procession and the float had been carried out into the sea. The acolytes and clergy remained on the shore.

Prayers were said at this point, but I was unfortunately too far away from the priests to be able to hear what was said.

Once in the sea, there was rather more room for the multitude than had been the case in the streets. The women, girls, and small children stayed nearest the shore, boys between the ages of approximately seven and seventeen waded further out into the water, and adult men went even further away from the shore. These three groups avoided contact with one another in the sea.

Another feature of ritual avoidance between the sexes was very evident in the sea. The fact that men and women were within sight of one another made it impossible for the adults who waded out into the water, and indeed for children over the age of six or seven, to remove more than their shoes. (The smaller children splashed happily around in underpants and tee-shirts.) Consequently those who went into the water regained the shore with their clothing soaked to mid-thigh level.

The procession back to the church was led by the pilgrims with the decorated wooden cross and escorted by the horsemen in the same manner as on the way to the sea.

The grouping that had prevailed in the sea was retained when the procession re-formed to return to the church. (This last detail may actually have had more to

do with what was feasible at that particular point in the proceedings than with the requirements of ritual purity.)

Upon arriving at the square in front of the church, the horsemen formed a guard of honor on either side of the church door. The church was already nearly full, as many people had taken seats there rather than follow the procession. Indeed a great number of those who had followed the procession were unable to get into the church. I myself stood in the end of the center aisle, nearest the west door of the church. By the time I came into the building the crosses, banners and the statue of Sara-li-kâli had been carried up into the choir.

The service consisted of prayers: the Magnificat was sung in Latin, with a verse of a French hymn to the saints of Provence sung after each response of the Magnificat; the Lord's Prayer (in French) and the Gloria patri (in Latin). A short address was given. Unfortunately, at the back of the church it was impossible to hear a word of it.

Apparently most of the congregation (probably about two-thirds) understood enough French to be able to join in the responses, and everyone seem to know the Gloria patri, although the wording of the Magnificat posed some problems. Leaflets had been printed with the prayers and hymns, but unfortunately there were not enough to go around.

At the end of the service Sara-li-kâli was returned to her usual place in the crypt. It was impossible to see how exactly this was accomplished, as the congregation in the church started to move about immediately after the service finished. Some people left the church, others went down into the crypt, and others approached the reliquary of Saints Marie Jacobé and Salomé, or the side altar dedicated to these two saints.

Tables bearing a striking resemblance to the old fashioned zinc trays used in wash-houses or sculleries had been placed, together with more conventional candle-holders for votive candles, along the side walls of the crypt, and in front of the altars at the east end of the crypt. At first the crowd was so dense in the crypt that I gave up the attempt to see what was happening there, and returned to the church.

Later it was possible to move about in the crypt and to observe the proceedings. Most of those who visited the crypt approached the statue of Sara-li-kâli and made some gesture of respect. Typically both men and women bowed with their hands folded in the traditional gesture of prayer. Most women touched the saint's clothing reverently, some merely touching the hems of the garments, others stroking them from the shoulder to hem.

After this the pilgrims passed to the other side of the east end of the crypt and touched or bowed to the reliquary, which is said to contain Sara-li-kâli's bones.

Some pilgrims then left the crypt. Others had bought candles that they lit either before or after venerating the saint.

While I was in the crypt, I saw a couple of Gypsy girls approach Sara-li-kâli. They were carrying garments or material (it was impossible to see which), which they bundled up and placed under Sara-li-kâli's skirts. Their actions were somewhat furtive and they were evidently unwilling to give an explanation of what they were doing.

There are many votive plaques on the wall of the crypt, most simply state "Merci Ste Sara," "Thank you, St. Sara." although some also include the name of the grateful donor, and a rare example was more explicit, "Merci pour mon fils," "Thank you for my son". These plaques were all of the type common in this part of France, white marble oblong plaques with red lettering.

A pair of crutches had been placed in the corner behind the statue of the saint; as yet I have not been able to ascertain whether they had been placed there in gratitude for a miracle or in the hope that one would be granted through Sara-li-kâli's intercession.

A glass-fronted receptacle stood between the statue and the altar. Pilgrims put slips of paper, presumably written prayers or vows, into it.

Wedding bouquets lay on the altar in the crypt. We learned later from the parish priest that Gypsy women who make the pilgrimage within a year of their marriage donate their wedding bouquets to Sara-li-kâli.

In the church devotions were made all afternoon at the side-altar where the statues of Saints Marie Jacobé and Salome stand, and at the reliquary, which is only exposed on the saints' days.

All pilgrims, whether men or women, Gypsies or non-Gypsies, touched the reliquary and the statues of the two Marys.

1992 will, presumably, long be remembered as the year when the weather proved remarkably inclement. According to the locals the second half of May is usually warm and dry, and no one remembered Sara-li-kâli's procession taking place in the rain before. (This last statement may be taken as an indication of how unreliable popular memory actually is. The weather, judging from Ruth Partington's account, was inclement in 1948 as well [Partington 1951:72].) The weather made it difficult to ascertain the details of the proceedings, as the torrential rain often made it impossible to see what was happening and led to the procession's taking place rather more quickly than the preceding year.

The first rumbles of thunder were heard as Sara-li-kâli's procession left the church and long before it reached the sea the heavens opened and rain poured down, soaking everyone. At the exact moment that the float with the statue of Sara-li-kâli was carried out into the water, lightning struck about 100 meters further out to sea.

In these circumstances it is perhaps not surprising that neither priests nor pilgrims felt inclined to stay in the water for very long. Prayers were said with as

much speed as was consonant with respect, after which the bedraggled procession, carrying a very wet saint, retraced its steps to the church.

Probably the only advantage of the appalling weather was the fact that the tourists, who had come to sight-see rather than to take part in a religious ceremony, sought shelter indoors as soon as the heavy rain started, thus relieving the congestion in the village streets and consequently making it rather easier for the Gypsies in the procession to observe the ritual separation of the sexes.

In the church it was possible to observe the proceedings at leisure, and there it was readily apparent that the Gypsies were, as in 1991, scrupulous in avoiding even the slightest physical contact with members of the opposite sex, and that a similar anxiety governed the behavior of male Gypsies while venerating Sara-li-kâli.

Actually a great many more women than men thronged the crypt in order to pay their respects to Sara-li-kâli, but this fact probably reflects the general tendency for women to partake in greater numbers than men in the veneration of saints in general, than casts any particular light upon the religious behavior of the Gypsies, or upon the cult of Sara-li-kâli.

Gypsy women approach the statue of Sara-li-kâli, touch and kiss her garments, stroke her cheeks, kiss her face, lift small children up to kiss the saint and frequently put garments or pieces of material under Sara-li-kâli's skirts.

Gypsy men on the other hand generally remain at a respectful distance from Sara-li-kâli, bow to her from a distance of about three feet and stretch both hands, palm upwards, towards her, this gesture being made with both arms held simultaneously in front of the suppliant. This may be preceded by the man drawing the first and second fingers of either hand down his face from his eyes to his jawbone, as if tracing the course of his tears.

Gypsy men who draw nearer to Sara-li-kâli do so, not, usually, in order to touch her or her garments, but to put small notes, written on scraps of paper, or even in one instance on a cigarette packet, into the glass-fronted receptacle which stands between the statue of the saint and the altar.

This avoidance by Gypsy men of any direct contact with Sara-li-kâli or her possessions appears to reflect the fact that Sara is herself a Gypsy. It certainly cannot be held to be part of the usual veneration of saints, during which statues and reliquaries are frequently touched, embraced or kissed by pilgrims.

During the 1992 pilgrimage it could be seen that in the church Gypsy men approached the altar with the statues of Marie Jacobé and Marie Salomé without the slightest hesitation and touched and kissed the garments of these saints. Their reliquary too was touched by pilgrims irrespective of their sex, while Sara-li-kâli's reliquary in the crypt was approached, but not touched, by Gypsy men.

Avoidance of contact between adult men and women is observed in varying degrees by most Gypsies, and corresponds to similar "taboos" in primitive societies

or for that matter among observant Jews or Muslims. It is usually explained on the grounds of the ritual impurity of women, which is greatest during menstruation, pregnancy and childbirth, but which is never totally absent during a woman's childbearing years.

It must be emphasized here that the only form of male-female ritual avoidance discernible during the pilgrimage was that described above; i.e. avoidance of contact with members of the opposite sex, which for the Gypsy men included avoiding contact with Sara-li-kâli. The complex of rules concerning ritual impurity among Gypsies involves a great many other forms of impurity, which are however not relevant in the present context. What is relevant here is that Sara-li-kâli is a Gypsy, and is treated as such by Gypsy men and women who visit her shrine. The fact that she is held to be a saint by the Gypsies in no way alters the fact that she is female. The combination of female and Gypsy necessitates the application of the rules concerning ritual impurity to Sara-li-kâli.

In other words, male-female polarity was in no way disturbed by polarity between sacred and profane. Sara-li-kâli as a saint is an object of veneration to the Gypsies, but as a female saint she is placed within the same sphere of ritual avoidance, seen from a male Gypsy's point of view and exemplified in his behavior, as any other Gypsy woman.

There may be more than one interpretation of these rules in connection with Sara-li-kâli, but at present the evidence is slight, as shown in the following.

In one instance, one of the Gypsy men, after paying his respects to Sara-li-kâli in the manner described above, approached her and touched her cheeks. This does not necessarily indicate a contravention of the taboo involving contact between men and women, as such contact is generally accepted among Gypsies between a man and his nearest female relations (mother, grandmother, wife, sisters or daughters) and may very well indicate Sara-li-kâli's role of protectress.

The two other saints in the church, not being Gypsies, were not objects of ritual avoidance to the Gypsy men among the pilgrims.

Another form of ritual avoidance which was noticeable during the 1991 pilgrimage, was connected to the sacred-profane polarity in a way that had no connection with male-female polarity.

In 1991 the weather was as it is expected to be on Sara-li-kâli's day—dry, warm, and sunny, ideal weather not only for a holiday, but also for people, who like the majority of Gypsies present in Stes-Maries-de-la-Mer that day, make their living by various pursuits, for instance selling souvenirs, clothing, telling fortunes, dancing, singing, juggling, begging, etc., all of which are carried out in the open air, and, if business is to be brisk, are dependent upon the presence of many potential customers.

During the early part of the afternoon the majority of the Gypsies in Stes-Maries-de-la-Mer made good use of the fine weather and the large crowd and plied their various occupations assiduously. However as soon as Sara-li-kâli's procession left the church, all work among the Gypsies stopped abruptly and was not taken up again until the next day.

Now, normally the celebration of saints' days in southern Europe in no way prevents people from carrying on their usual work. Indeed, as often as not, people make hay while the sun shines and seize the opportunities afforded by a large crowd of pilgrims and tourists to do as much business as possible.

I was able to ascertain that the Gypsies who make the pilgrimage to Sara-li-kâli never work during her procession or for the rest of the day. The following day, which is dedicated to Marie Jacobé, and the day after, which is given over to a memorial service for the Marquis du Baroncelli (1869–1943), a local landowner who was a staunch friend of the Gypsies, in the morning and a bullfight in the afternoon, the Gypsies are clearly bent upon making money, although there is still time for social gatherings and visits to the church for private devotions.

Thus it seems we can assume another instance of ritual avoidance, the avoidance of work or of earning money in the course of Sara-li-kâli's festival.

As yet we have not had the opportunity of verifying whether a similar avoidance of work forms part of the Gypsy pilgrimages to other shrines (Lourdes, Saragossa, etc.) or whether it only takes place at Stes-Maries-de-la-Mer and thus is related to Sara-li-kâli's being a Gypsy. The last-mentioned possibility may very well prove to be correct, as the Gypsies present in Stes-Maries-de-la-Mer on Saint Marie Jacobé's day did not consider it necessary to refrain from work on May 25th.

I conclude that ritual avoidance of contact between unrelated adults, which forms part of most Gypsies' daily life, plus ritual avoidance of remunerative work during Sara-li-kâli's saint's day is an important feature of the Gypsies' veneration of their patroness, not because she is a saint, as similar ritual avoidance was in no way applicable to the other two saints, both venerated on the 24th as a courtesy during the festival for Sara-li-kâli and on Marie Jacobé's own day, May 25th, but because Sara-li-kâli is herself a Gypsy.

In this connection it is important to note that the rules applicable to Sara-li-kâli seem to be identical to the rules applicable to any mortal Gypsy woman, and this being so, there is evidently no supposition that the saint is different from other Gypsy women.

The rules concerning Gypsy men's avoidance of contact with unrelated Gypsy women are not canceled by the sanctity of Sara-li-kâli. On the contrary they are observed as particularly with regards to the saint as with regards to any other Gypsy woman. Whether there are other rules concerning ritual purity that have to be observed in connection with Sara-li-kâli remains to be seen.

Examination of Gypsy participation in various other pilgrimages and religious ceremonies, for instance Holy Week festivities in Seville, could possibly better elucidate the role of ritual purity in the religious life of the Gypsies of Southern Europe. It is my hope that further research on this subject can contribute to a greater degree to the depiction of Sara-li-kâli and her role as the patroness of the Gypsies.

Notes

¹Yoor's references are numerous and to be found in nearly all of the chapters of his book.

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Protestant Evangelicalism Among the Spanish Gypsies

Merrill F. McLane

On their arrival in Western Europe in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the Gypsies had lost most of their religious beliefs carried out of India. Nominally adopting the religion of host countries, Muslim in Turkey, Orthodox in Greece, Catholic in France and Spain, and Protestant in England, they were rarely active participants. But in the 1960s the Spanish Gypsies, influenced by its growth in France, began to convert to Protestant Evangelicalism, a movement that has continued to grow into the 1990s. Despite the Gypsy converts' viewing Evangelicalism as a means of strengthening their identity, their culture is threatened by the loss of those traditional elements regarded as incompatible with the new faith by their Gypsy pastors.

Since the 1960s large numbers of Spanish Gypsies (*gitanos*) have converted to Protestant Evangelicalism. This conversion contrasts with the earlier ambivalent attitude of Gypsies toward formal religion. This paper will review the origin and growth of the movement, suggest reasons for the Gypsies becoming Evangelicals, and consider its effect on Gypsy identity.

The Gypsies have nominally assumed the religion of their host countries, becoming Muslim in Turkey, Orthodox in Greece, Catholic in France and Spain, and Protestant in England. The religions carried out of India have not survived, although remnants are found in *Caló*, the Indic-related Romany language of *gitanos*, in *Debel* 'God', *ben* 'devil', and *baxt*, which translates as 'luck', but which has religious sentiments for many Gypsies.

In their migration into western Europe, the Gypsies supposedly received a document from Pope Martin V in 1423 granting them safe passage. In the same year Holy Roman Emperor Sigismund issued a similar document (Liégeois 1971:60). Although the authenticity of the safe-conduct has been questioned (Fraser 1993:64–

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79), the Gypsies seem to have used it in their continued westward migration. Following their establishment in the west, however, they were regarded as being only nominal Christians. In the 1600s in France they were baptized but church-sanctioned marriages were rare, and priests warned their congregations against these "Egyptian vagabonds" (Vaux de Foletier 1961:13). George Borrow noted in the 1830s that Gypsies in England were viewed as ignorant of religion. Paspatis (1870:13) said that Christian Gypsies in Greece did not become baptized and that Muslim Gypsies in Turkey were not circumcised.

Following their arrival in Spain in 1425 they took part in various religious activities. In 1435, led by a Count Thomas of Little Egypt who had a safe-conduct from Alfonso V of Aragón, they made a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela (Leblon 1964:1), and in 1470 a group visited the shrine of the Virgin of Guadalupe. In the early 1600s they danced and sang in religious processions in Córdoba and Granada. Soon, though, the Spanish criticized the Gypsies' Catholicism. The Cortes in 1603 referred to their "irreligion" (Liégeois 1964:18). Cervantes expresses the popular view when he has a character in "The Dogs' Colloquy" say that he rarely saw a Gypsy taking communion (1972:240). Juan de Quiñones, a priest, recommended their expulsion, accusing them of never entering church (1631:11). During the Inquisition Gypsies were charged with heresy, along with bigamy and witchcraft, and if found guilty were sentenced to lashings, imprisonment, or service in the galleys (Sánchez 1988:51). In the 1700s an English traveler said that Gypsies were regarded as unbelievers (Swinburne 1777:535), and George Borrow was upset because the Gypsy women in his congregation in Madrid took copies of his translation of Saint Luke into Caló, although unable to read it, for their "thieving expeditions" (1935:186).

These early views are shared by laymen and clergy in the Spain of today. Most of the priests I interviewed, including J. Sánchez, who has written on the Gypsies (1962), distrusted the Gypsies' Catholicism because few attend Mass. But while it is true that they avoid the Mass and most Holy Day processions and pilgrimages, they take part in those of their choosing, such as Holy Week in Seville and the pilgrimage to the Virgin of Rocío in Huelva province.

The Evangelical movement among the Spanish Gypsies has its roots in France where a non-Gypsy pastor, Clément Le Cossec of the Assembly of God, converted the first French Gypsies in the 1950s. Since then the denomination has grown rapidly, with the press reporting on Evangelical conventions and other activities (Darnton 1983:2). The first Spanish Gypsies to be converted, in the late 1950s, were migrant workers in southern France. French Gypsy pastors preached in Barcelona in 1961 (Ridholls 1986:64). In 1971 a revival was held in Valladolid, and in the same year the movement under the name of Philadelphia was recognized by the Spanish government. However, only after the approval of the constitution of

1978 that granted religious freedom could members practice their faith without police interference.

Since then the movement has grown, with congregations not only in major cities but also in smaller cities and in villages. By 1984, according to Ridholls (1986:70), 30,000 Gypsies had been baptized. Wang estimates that one-third of the Gypsies in the province of Madrid belong to the movement (1985:6). But as in France accurate tallies of Evangelicals are not available, and these figures may be too high. The movement in Spain is unstructured, lacking record-keeping capabilities to maintain statistics on the number of Gypsies who convert and those who do not. In Vigo in Pontevedra province, for example, which has an Evangelical church, some Gypsies have no interest in it. The same situation exists in Lorca in Murcia province and in other cities. Neither do estimates show converts who leave through the "revolving back door," as Evangelicals refer to dropouts. Some of these departures can probably be attributed to disappointment with the perceived benefits of joining and to burnout from attending the many obligatory *cultos*, as their services are called, often held daily.

The backbone of the denomination is its pastors, all of whom are Gypsies, whose lack of theological training is compensated for by their enthusiasm and conviction. These pastors, with only a Bible, a few copies of translations of statements by Evangelists in other countries, and without hymnals (congregations memorize hymns learned from the pastors), arrive in cities and villages of their choosing to recruit converts to form a church. They hold services in cave homes or other simple dwellings, frequently with the cross as the only religious symbol. After reading from the Bible, pastors deliver short, fiery sermons, followed by joyous singing by the women accompanied by hand clapping in flamenco fashion. The services I attended were more subdued than the French Gypsy services described by an English evangelist as "the very stuff of Pentecostalism because of their healing and spirit baptism" (Ridholls 1986:36). There was no healing, no speaking in tongues, and no free praying by members of the congregation, as is common at Evangelical services in other countries.

I learned of the movement among the Spanish Gypsies in 1974 in the city of Baza, 60 miles east of Granada, where most of the Gypsies live in caves above the city proper. Information on the activities of a Gypsy pastor, absent because of poor health, came from a young Catholic priest whose church was located below the caves. The priest, who was favorably disposed toward the pastor, said that he lived in a cave, taught the Gypsies to sing hymns with a Gypsy rhythm, and was teaching them to read so they could understand the Bible. A few years later in the village of Benalúa de Guadix, also in Granada province, before the approval of Spain's new constitution, I spoke with a Gypsy pastor and attended one of his services. The pastor, converted by a French Gypsy in Málaga, had arrived six months before. He

worked as a day laborer and lived with his wife and children in a cave, one of whose rooms was used for the nightly *cultos* for about 25 Gypsies. A few months later he was evicted from the village on the grounds, according to an official in the court system, that he was critical of the Catholic Church. I observed a similar service in Avila in Madrid province where the pastor was one of the Gypsy horse traders in the weekly market, one of the few in Spain still selling horses. In 1992 in Granada in the Polígono de Cartujo quarter, Gypsy Evangelicals held elaborate nightly *cultos* for about 80 members. Music was provided by a group playing guitar, tambourine, and synthesizer amplified by loudspeakers that thundered throughout the area. At one service the pastor addressed the congregation on the dangers of using alcohol, drugs, and on other evils of the day.

In South America and other regions where Evangelicalism has become popular, it has developed into a political and economic force, although in its formative years the focus had been religious (Howard 1992:29). In France where it began earlier than in Spain, Gypsy pastors are striving to improve the material life of their congregations. In Spain similar action has only recently arrived with pastors such as the one in Piños Puente in Granada province who is working with government officials to avoid having aid to poor Gypsies channeled through Catholic organizations.

Gypsy Evangelicals, known as "Aleluyas," are not from the thin stratum of Gypsies who have succeeded economically, such as antique dealers and waiters in Mallorca. Most are illiterate and poor. Having lost their traditional occupations as smiths, horse traders, and mule shearers in the 1960s and 1970s as Spain moved out of the Third World economy, they have had to seek other economic niches. Some are working as they did in the old Spain, harvesting crops as migrant workers, shining shoes, and selling flowers. Others sell lottery tickets, work in markets, collect junk, and work on construction in Switzerland (though no longer in Germany). Gypsy women are entering the work force as cleaning women and restaurant workers. These decades have not only been difficult economically as the Gypsies compete with poor non-Gypsies for the same resources, but socially as well. Their efforts to gain better housing are thwarted by urban non-Gypsies who have rioted against Gypsies' living in public housing (Crónica 1984:12; Diario 16 1985:8). This further alienation from the larger society, historically centered on the middle class, has encouraged them to seek redress in a religion other than Catholicism. A survey of Gypsies in Madrid found that only a few looked to the established church as helping to find solutions to their problems (San Román 1986:152). As in France, to them the Catholic Church is a symbol of the power of the non-Gypsy world (Glize 1988:36). This is one reason for the Gypsies' seizing on Evangelicalism as an escape from insecurity into the emotional stability of a Gypsy social movement. Although pastors claim that the churches are open to all,

cultos are exclusively Gypsy, as in France where there is little contact with non-Gypsy Evangelicals (Williams 1984:50). Since there are few non-Gypsy Evangelicals in Spain, this leads to the Gypsies' belief that the movement is unique to them, and that with it they have acquired another cultural feature distinct from the non-Gypsy society.

Although it is a break with the history of Gypsies and their religious practices, the Spanish Gypsies appear to be finding religious satisfaction in their new faith as other marginal people have done during the past three decades, the poor of Central and South America. They speak sincerely of "walking with God" and "serving God."

Their conversion was facilitated by identification with the pastors, who live among them and work at the same occupations. A Gypsy convert in Granada referred to pastors as functioning within the Gypsies' *forma de vida* 'life style'. Pastors encourage spontaneity from the members in the services, which gives them a sense of participation not found in the Mass. The pastors' closeness to them contrasts with their experience in Catholicism where they felt that most priests were unsympathetic toward them, although there have been priests devoted to their religious and social welfare.

The World Council of Churches (Anonymous 1979:291) sees a strength in the Evangelical movement among the Gypsies in that, unlike previous efforts to convert them, it does not lead to an abandonment of Gypsy life, holding that they can be better Gypsies on becoming Christian. On the other hand, Evangelical leaders encourage the loss of Gypsy cultural elements (Cozannet 1979:157). In Spain, pastors have curtailed the dancing and guitar playing of flamenco performers who are in the movement. This follows the pattern of restrictions placed on Gypsy Evangelicals in France where members are forbidden to tell fortunes and to hold special ceremonies for the dead on the grounds that they are in conflict with the Bible (Glize 1988:40).

Non-Evangelical Gypsies are troubled by developments like these and are critical of the authority of the pastors, which they see as destroying traditional family structure. They note that it has created divisiveness where non-Evangelicals within the family are scorned. A Gypsy from Santa Fé near Granada told me that a neighboring family, after converting, expelled a grown son who had declined conversion. Divisiveness also occurs within the larger community, when a converted family severs social relations with non-Evangelical Gypsies.

The outlook of Gypsy pastors is similar to that of missionaries, wary of the pagan beliefs of the people they are trying to convert. This results in their carrying with them a fear of the previous attitudes of the Gypsies toward formal religion and in an anxiety to eliminate memories of the pre-Evangelical past. Pastors never, for example, use Caló, the Romany language of the Spanish Gypsies, although the

terms *Debel* and *ben* are readily available. The pastors apparently look on them as symbols of an era to be forgotten. As a means of maintaining the break with Catholicism, pastors minimize the position of the Virgin Mary, and encourage members to remove images of her from their homes. This erasing of previous customs related to the display of religious images seems to be typical of Evangelical protocol elsewhere. In California a Serbian Orthodox Gypsy group discarded family icons after conversion (Nemeth 1986:12).

Because of its youth, it is premature to predict the future of the Evangelical movement among the Spanish Gypsies, although it has the possibility of continued growth. Up to now, the shared ritual, viewed as their own, has strengthened identity despite the weeding out by pastors of customs conflicting with Evangelical interpretations of the practice of Christianity. It may be, however, that a point will be reached when the tradeoff of traditions for Evangelicalism will be seen by the Gypsies as too high a price to pay, leading to a disintegration of the movement.

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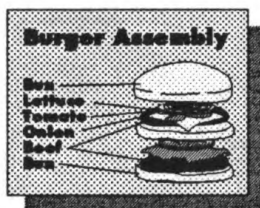
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